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JOHN BUNYAN
His Life and Times



JOHN BUNYAN.
From the picture by Sadler (1685).

JOHN BUNYAN

His Life and Times

BY

R. WINBOULT HARDING, B.D.

Author of

Fellowship, the Authority of Jesus, &c.

Give me my scallop shell of quiet,
My staff of faith to lean upon,
My scrip of joy, immortal diet,
My bottle of salvation,
My gown of glory, hope's true gage,
And thus I'll take my pilgrimage
Sir Walter Raleigh

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COMPARATIVE DATES

BUNYAN

- November 30, 1628 : Bunyan christened (exact date of birth unrecorded)
- 1644-1647. Soldier.
- 1649 First Marriage.
- 1653 Joined John Gifford's Church at Bedford.
1655. Began to preach. (?) Second Marriage.
1656. Published his first book.
- 1660-1672. In Bedford County Gaol.
1666. *Grace Abounding*.
1671. Elected Pastor of Bedford Meeting.
1672. Release (May 17)
1675. Second Imprisonment (six months).
- 1678 *Pilgrims Progress*. Part I published (written 1675).
1680. *Life and Death of Mr. Badman*
1682. *Holy War*.
- 1684 *Pilgrim's Progress* Part II.
1688. Death of Bunyan in London.

OTHER EVENTS

- 1615 Second Part of *Don Quixote* published.
1616. Shakespeare died.
1620. ' Mayflower ' pilgrims landed in New England.
- 1625-1649. Reign of Charles I.
- 1630 Puritan Emigration to New England.
1633. Laud, Archbishop.
1637. Hampden refused to pay Ship-money.
1642. First Civil War.
- 1643-1715. Louis XIV. King of France.

1645. Cromwell raises 'New Model' Army
 1653-1658. Cromwell, Lord Protector.
 1660-1685. Reign of Charles II.
 1661-1665. 'Clarendon Code' (Acts : Uniformity, Conventicle, Five mile, &c.)
 1662. Puritan clergy evicted. Royal Society founded.
 1665. Plague. Newton's *Theory of Fluxions*.
 1666. Fire of London
 1667. The Dutch Fleet in the Medway
 1672. Declaration of Indulgence—withdrawn 1673.
 1685-1688. Reign of James II.
 1685. Monmouth's Rebellion. Judge Jeffreys.
 1687. Declaration of Indulgence.
 1688-1702. Reign of William of Orange

CONTEMPORARY AUTHORS.

Baxter (1615-1691) ; Butler (1612-1680 : *Hudibras*, 1662) ; Crashaw (1616-1650) ; Detoe (1661-1731) ; Dryden (1631-1700) ; Evelyn (1620-1706) ; Fox (1624-1690) ; Herbert (1593-1632) ; Herrick (1591-1674) ; Hobbes (1588-1679) ; Marvell (1621-1678) ; Milton (1608-1674. *Paradise Lost*, 1667) ; Newton (1642-1727) ; Pepys (1632-1703) ; J. Taylor (1613-1667) ; Isaac Walton (1593-1683).

JOHN BUNYAN

CHAPTER I

EARLY LIFE

THE home of political and religious Independency in England lies inside a line drawn on the map from the Wash, through Leicester, Reading, and London to Colchester and the Essex coast. Within this area are the Fens, where the invading Danes landed and settled, and among whose marshes Hereward the Wake held out against William the Norman. Here also, in the villages of Bedford and Suffolk, one finds traces of the industries imported by the Flemish refugees who fled from the cruelties of Philip and Alva. Great castles, like those on the Welsh Marches, are not frequent here, for it has always been a country of squires, farmers, small-holders, and scholars. Tradition has it that the University of Cambridge originated in a protest of those who wanted more freedom than they could find in Oxford. The Paston Letters witness to the sturdiness and self reliance of the smaller gentry of Norfolk in the fifteenth century.

Scenery and climate have something to do with these characteristics. East Anglians live under wide skies which touch the earth on horizons far

to

JOHN BUNYAN

away. Keen winds in winter, and bright sunshine in summer, brace the body and clear the vision. Yet here, as in Sven Hedin's *Central Asia*, life is not 'a dance upon the dropping petals of the rose.' In some parts of these counties, fertile lands have been won from the sea, or from slow-flowing rivers whose level, here and there, is above that of the surrounding fields. Men who live and prosper in such conditions become tough and hardy. If they think slowly, they think for themselves. A stranger might suppose that they are realists, dealing only with facts, and not with ideals or pictures of the imagination.

If, however, the stranger would study the history of the Christian Church in Eastern England, he would find himself mistaken in thinking that its people were without imagination. Religion won its footing here with difficulty, but its genius has been more British than Roman, and native independence has been a strong feature of its growth. Such independence has been obliged to fight for its life, and it has survived only because of strongly-held ideals. This is the reason why Puritanism had its birth here. Puritanism, like Methodism, was not, at first, a break-away from the Established Church, but a ferment within its borders. The letters and speeches of Oliver Cromwell, the most typical of Eastern Englishmen, show that a vivid sense of the Living God is the parent of powers of imagination, reverence, and awe. Without these qualities in action, the Eastern Association would never have sent the Ironsides to answer Cromwell's

call for ‘men of religion to cope with the King’s men of honour.’ Without the same qualities in thought, *Pilgrim’s Progress* would never have been written.

The County of Bedford, lying on the western border of this tract of England, was the home of the Bunyan family. They must have been scattered widely, for Manor Rolls and other documents show thirty-four ways of spelling the name. They are mentioned as being in the county in 1200 A.D., and in the village of Elstow in 1327. The most interesting of all the records is the brief entry in the Baptismal register of Elstow Parish Church :

‘ John, the sonne of Thos. Bonnion, Junr, 30th November, 1628.’

The Bunyan family was of long descent, but poor. John’s grandfather left sixpence to each of his children ‘when they accomplish their severale ages of one and twentie yeares.’ His father was a brazier, or white-smith, and when the son began to work he followed his father’s trade. It is possible that his second wife is responsible for the usual description of his calling. In 1661, she appealed to Sir Matthew Hale to release him from prison. ‘What is his calling?’ asked the judge. ‘A tinker, my Lord,’ said Mistress Bunyan, ‘and because he is a tinker, and a poor man, therefore he is despised, and cannot have judgement.’

The materials for Bunyan’s early years are scanty, and are chiefly found in his own words in *Grace*

Abounding. He is, however, the most provoking of autobiographers, for he never gives an exact date. He even leaves room for his historians to differ about his education. Says he, 'It pleased God to put it into (my parents') hearts to put me to school, to learn me both to read and write . the which I also attained according to the rate of other poor men's children.' In the Epistle to the Reader of *The Doctrine of Law and Grace Unfolded* (1659) he writes, 'If thou do find this book empty of fantastical expressions, and without light, vain, whimsical, scholarlike terms, thou must understand that it is because I never went to school, to Aristotle, or Plato, but was brought up at my father's house, in a very mean condition, among a company of poor countrymen.'

His own friend and pastor, John Burton, in a preface to Bunyan's first book (*Some Gospel Truths Opened*, 1656) says, 'This man is not chosen out of an earthly, but out of the heavenly university. He hath through grace taken these three heavenly degrees, to wit, union with Christ, the anointing of the Spirit, and experiences of the temptations of Satan, which do more fit a man for that mighty work of preaching the gospel than all university learning and degrees that can be had.'

It is, then, more probable that Bunyan was educated at Elstow Parish school than, as Froude suggests, at Bedford grammar school, which was two miles away from the cottage at Harrowden where the lad was born, and only half a mile nearer to Elstow. As Mark Rutherford points out,

seventeenth-century mud would make regular attendance at the grammar school impossible.

Bunyan tells us that he soon lost what he had learned. We must not take him too literally, for he pays his tribute to education when he brings his Pilgrim to the House Beautiful, and makes the Sisters equip him for his journey to the Celestial City. 'In the morning, they told him that he should not depart till they had shown him the rarities of that place. And first they had him into the study.' If during his teens he gave up trying to learn, he resumed the effort when he came of age, and was a diligent student to the end.

'When I was a soldier,' Bunyan writes, 'I with others was drawn out to go to such a place to besiege it.' When and where was that? He gives no light—he is thinking of the Lord's deliverances, and not of places and dates. But in the muster roll of the garrison of Newport Pagnell, 'John Bunion' appears on the strength as from November 30, 1644 to June 17, 1647. Probably, therefore, the press-gang got hold of 'John Bunion' on his sixteenth birthday. Carlyle sees him, on the Royalist side, taking part in the siege of Leicester in 1645, 'not yet writing his *Pilgrim's Progress* on paper, but acting it on the face of the earth, with a brown matchlock on his shoulder.' Two years after his discharge, in 1649, he married his first wife, who died in 1655, leaving him with four little children. We do not know her name or origin. 'It was my mercy to light upon a wife whose father and mother were counted godly. This woman and I, though

we came together as poor as poor might be (not having so much household stuff as a dish or spoon betwixt us both), yet this she had for her part, *The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven*, and *The Practice of Piety*, which her father had left her when he died. In these two books I sometimes read. In the first of these works, which was published in 1600, there are pithy sentences, such as, 'He that never troubled, never believed; or, Sweet meat will have sour sauce.' 'No meat, no grace,' said James, is Bunyan's reproduction in his second part of the 'Progress.' It is interesting to know that the *Practice of Piety* was a favourite book with Joseph Alleine, on whose work John Wesley based his 'Form of Service for those who would make their covenant with God.' It may perhaps be conjectured that the *Plain Man's Pathway* suggested the title for Bunyan's masterpiece.

Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners ranks with the Epistles of St. Paul and the Confessions of St. Augustine as one of the classics of self-revelation. It is the key to the origin and meaning of *Pilgrim's Progress*. Yet the latter, in a sense written more objectively, is a corrective of the introspection of the former. Christian, who is a picture of his author's personal experience, is a fine fellow in spite of his failings. So is Bunyan, in spite of the blame he puts on himself in *Grace Abounding*. He confesses to some carnal sins, as he labels them, such as playing tip-cat on Sunday, bell-ringing—for which he feared the steeple would fall on him; dancing, which cost him a year's struggle to give

up ; and swearing, for which a foul-mouthed old dame in Bedford rebuked and shamed him. ‘ How it came to pass I know not, but I did from this time forward so leave my swearing that it was a great wonder to myself to observe it ; and whereas before I knew not how to speak unless I put an oath before and another behind, to make my words have authority, now I could without it speak better and with more pleasantness than ever I could before.’ In whatever other sin Bunyan was found, he never indulged in sexual vice. Tales were carried about, but he smites the talebearers as with a hammer. ‘ My foes have missed their mark in this their shooting at me. I am not the man. I wish that they themselves be guiltless. If all the fornicators and adulterers in England were hanged up by the neck till they be dead, JOHN BUNYAN, the object of their envy, would be still alive and well.’

Grace Abounding is chiefly concerned with the story of an inward struggle which lasted for four years, from 1646 to 1650. The things which troubled Bunyan’s conscience were not outward sins. Fears and doubts were his enemies. His daily meditation was in the word of God, and sometimes he would see light, and sometimes darkness. The example of Esau was a constant menace, the figure of the Cities of Refuge a continual comfort. ‘ I lived for some time very sweetly at peace with God through Christ. Oh, methought, Christ ! Christ ! I would reckon that all those graces of God that were now green on me were yet like those cracked

groats and fourpence-halfpennies that rich men carry in their purses, when their gold is in their trunks at home. Oh, I saw that my gold was in my trunk at home—in Christ my Lord and Saviour ! ' Yet a year and a half afterwards 'that wicked, sinful thought of which I have spoken before went through my wicked heart, even this thought, let Christ go if he will. I should have believed God's word, and not have put an *if* upon his all-seeingness.'

So for four years the ding-dong fight went on. He felt himself like a horse 'flouncing' towards sound ground, that yet sticks in the mire. The most irrelevant Bible stories carried a threat. 'I would think of Esther, who went to petition the King contrary to the law. I thought also of Ben-hadad's servants, who went with ropes under their heads to their enemies for mercy.' His temptations would take bodily shape. 'Many a pull hath my heart had with Satan.' Giants Despair, Grim, and Maul were living models of Bunyan's spiritual foes.

Deliverance came when, in 1650, he began to attend the ministry of John Gifford. This man had been a notorious sinner. He was captured by Fairfax at Maidstone and condemned to death, in 1648. He escaped to Bedford, and was there converted. In 1650 he was elected pastor of St. John's Church, for Cromwell's establishment admitted Independents, Baptists, or Presbyterians to Anglican benefices, provided they did not use the Prayer Book. Under Gifford's powerful influence, Bunyan was led to join the Church in 1653, and we hear

little more of fears or doubts after 1655, when, 'having been awakened, and helped to see the want and worth of Jesus Christ our Lord, and also to venture my soul upon Him,' he was desired by some of the most discerning of the saints occasionally to speak a word of exhortation to them. It was on active service that Bunyan found peace.

Nearly thirty years after his conversion, Bunyan published a Discourse (which runs to 60 double-column pages in Offor's Edition) on John vi, 37, entitled *Come and Welcome to Jesus Christ*. The old warrior bears and remembers the scars of his early conflicts. He speaks of faith's struggles in the midst of doubts. "Bid me come," said Peter. "Come," said Christ. So he went down out of the ship to go to Jesus, but his hap was to go to him upon the water; there was the trial. So it is with the poor desiring soul. He comes upon the water, upon drowning difficulties; if, therefore, the wind of temptations blow, the waves of doubts and fears will presently arise, and this coming sinner will begin to sink. You shall find here in Peter's little faith, a two-fold act; to wit, coming and crying . . . This should teach old Christians to pity and pray for young comers. Mend up the path for them, take the stumbling-blocks out of the way; lest that which is feeble and weak be turned aside, but let it rather be healed (Heb. xii.).' This last reference is to the passage which brought daylight to the writer at the end of *Grace Abounding*.

The same note of tenderness is struck again and again in Bunyan's works. Let one instance suffice,

from the second part of the *Pilgrim's Progress*. Christiana and her children got into great difficulties on the enchanted ground 'They prayed their guide to strike a light, that they might go the rest of their way by the help of the light of a lantern. So he struck a light, and they went by the help of that through the rest of this way, though the darkness was very great. But the children began to be sorely weary, and they cried unto Him that loveth pilgrims to make their way more comfortable. So by that they had gone a little further, a wind arose that drove away the fog so the air became more clear.'

A year after the death of his friend, John Gifford, Bunyan began to preach in the villages round Bedford. In the course of his wanderings he came into conflict with the Quakers, just now very active under the leadership of George Fox. Thinking that by their doctrine of the Inward Light the Friends disparaged the written word, and incensed by their rejection of Calvinist tenets, Bunyan took up the cudgels against them. The unedifying quarrel led to his first venture into authorship, and he published, in 1656, *Some Gospel Truths Opened*. Here and in the sequel, he hurls epithets like 'Ranter,' and 'Rabshakeh,' at his opponent. But the work is not typical of his spirit, and in after years he regrets time wasted in controversy.

In 1660 died John Burton, the second pastor of the Nonconformist congregation which met in the Anglican Church of St. John. In the same year, on the fall of the Commonwealth Government,

Charles II returned from exile and came 'to enjoy his own.' Under the influence of Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, the work of ejecting Puritan clergy from Anglican livings was begun, and the Bedford congregation found itself homeless. They remained without 'a convenient place for meeting,' for twelve years. During those dark years Bunyan lay in Bedford Gaol.

NOTE ON THE TOPOGRAPHY OF 'PILGRIM'S PROGRESS'

There are different theories as to the part of England which was in Bunyan's mind when he described the scenery through which the road passes in *Pilgrim's Progress*. The simplest is that, in his prison, the writer would think of the country he had known from boyhood, and that out of many memories he made a composite picture, details of which cannot be identified. Another theory is that he depicted the country in which he had found refuge from persecution, and that the country was the part of Surrey around Guildford, Shalford, and Dorking. It would seem likely that this theory arises from an association of ideas about the historic Pilgrims' Way which passes through that neighbourhood.

The reasonable thing is to treat the whole framework of the story as the product of an imagination which was moulded by impressions dating back to Bunyan's earliest days.

CHAPTER II

THE PURITAN SPIRIT

WHEN the Commonwealth Government fell in 1660, and Charles II came back from exile to be King of England, Bunyan was in his thirty-third year. Hitherto he had passed his days in the quiet village of Elstow, or plying his trade along the roads and lanes of Bedfordshire. His first wife had died about 1655, leaving him with two sons and two daughters, Mary and Elizabeth. Mary was blind, and her affliction bound her to him 'more nearly than all beside.' He tells us that as he lay in prison, 'the parting with my wife and poor children hath often been to me in this place as the pulling of the flesh from the bones. Oh, the thoughts of the hardship I thought my poor blind one might go under would break my heart in pieces !' She was the only one of his children who did not survive him.

Bunyan married a second time before 1661, for it was in that year that his wife, Elizabeth, defended him before Sir Matthew Hale. By this marriage he had a son and a daughter, Sarah, who in 1686 married William Browne, of the Parish of St. Cuthbert, Bedford. Sarah's grand-daughter, Frances Browne, died in 1803, and in her will left

to her minister, Charles Vorley, pastor of the Baptist Church in Coulton, 'my cedar nest of drawers,' a little cabinet which had been the property of John himself. It may still be seen in the Museum at Bedford Meeting House. The descendants of Sarah's nephew, William Brown, were the last representatives of John Bunyan's line. Dr. John Brown, in his third edition of Bunyan's Life (1887) states that 'one of them, a man of sixty-five, admitted lately that though he knew he was descended from its author, he had not yet read the *Pilgrim's Progress* "because he never was much given to books."

Bunyan's life covers the period between 1628 and 1688. He lived under Charles I, Cromwell, Charles II, and James II, and died two months after the acquittal of the Seven Bishops and the dispatch of the invitation to William of Orange to come over and displace the Catholic James. Bunyan saw the Civil War through to its conclusion ; he was in full manhood when its result was reversed with the Restoration of Charles II ; he saw English loyalty, even to a bad King, stand the strain of Monmouth's mad rebellion ; and, in the fall of James II, he saw that loyalty turn from the person of the King to the ideal for which Kingship stands in this realm.

That ideal took shape in Bunyan's lifetime. It is the ideal of ordered freedom. Cromwell's thrust against Charles I would not have succeeded if Charles had not been obsessed by the thought of the Divine Right of Kings, who, he supposed, were the direct representatives of God in all matters which concern

State and Church. But it is quite as true to say that Cromwell could not so nearly have turned England into a Republic, if he had not imposed order upon liberty; and it was the Commonwealth's over-emphasis of system at the expense of liberty that brought down its Government and recalled the King. England had still a long way to travel before she found a balance in our modern constitutional Monarchy. But in Bunyan's lifetime a step was taken when Hampden, Milton, and Coke spoke for the subject's independence and responsibility.

Such an ideal could not be confined to politics; it entered into and moulded religious thought and action. It is, indeed, impossible to separate political and religious history in the Stuart times. Men fought one another with bitter zeal, and the battle was waged over differing views of God, the State, and the individual. Charles I fought for his conception of the State ruled by a divinely appointed King, who should speak in the very Name of God. Cromwell fought for his conception of the State as ruled directly by God, acting by His Spirit in the hearts and minds of godly men. Charles lost his cause and his life because his theory was bad and his practice worse. Cromwell's Government failed because, in practice, men were neither godly nor kindly enough to bear so great a responsibility. The nature of the struggle shows how close was the union between religion and politics. The separation between the two began with Charles II, who did not care a toss about religion, and only attended to political duty because he must. When James II

fled the country before the Protestant Prince of Orange, his downfall was brought about because he had striven to introduce Roman Catholicism, which Englishmen had come to regard as a foreign political force under a religious guise.

This ideal of personal independence, checked by personal responsibility, had its roots in the Reformation teaching about religion, which opened to every man the door of direct approach to God. The irritating tyranny of Charles I, which was in bitter opposition to such teaching, gave rise to the Puritan party, a party led by keen politicians and zealous 'saints.' There had been Puritans before this date in all parties and ranks. The name had been coined to designate all men who thought that England must be made safe from Roman interference, and that the manners and morals of clerics and laity ought to be reformed. The term was, at first, a nick-name as was the case with the words, 'Christian,' 'Quaker,' and 'Methodist.' But the sterling character of these reformers has turned the name into a badge of honour. In the time of James I the 'Puritans' were scattered and unorganized. The dreadful peril of despotism under Charles I welded them into a party, and forced them into politics.

In religious opinion they were not uniformly alike. There is no such thing as a Puritan creed. They laid the emphasis on inward experience and outward good conduct rather than on theology. The motive power of their protest was their belief that 'God is a Spirit,' and that those alone worship truly who do so in spirit and truth. Ritual was a

matter of no moment to some ; to others it was an abomination. But all were, in the main, loyal to the Church of England as it had been left settled and established by Elizabeth and her successor. It was only the stupidity of James I, and the blind despotism of Charles I that endangered the position of Bishop and Prayer Book. The Puritans stood for the right of every man, as a man, to have direct access to God. When the crisis that united them was over, their insistence on liberty broke them up into a hundred sects.

Divided as they were in religious thought, they were united in the strictness of their morality. They strove for the sanctity of the Lord's Day, as against the old English love of sport that sent the 'Lord of Misrule' capering through the aisles of the village parish church after morning prayers had been read, or found its outlet in bear-baiting on the village green. The dress of the Puritan men was severely plain, while that of their women folk was very simple, in strong contrast with the absurdities of the fashions of the time. A visit to the National Gallery of Portraits is instructive as to the personal appearance of the leaders on both sides. Prince Rupert is evidently the soldier and the sportsman, while Pym and Cromwell are as evidently men of vision, thought, and action.

The morality of the Puritans sprang from a source deeper than mere protest. They were shocked, it is true, by the carelessness, frivolity, and swinish ignorance of their surroundings, but the best of them did not excuse themselves. The

true Puritan was given to introspection. He knew by heart the agony of the Penitential Psalms, or the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. By study and prayer, he sought deliverance from the tyranny of the evil imagination. By stern self-discipline he cultivated high ideals of probity in public and private life. He was temperate in appetite, fervent in devotion, and punctual in business. In the realized presence of God he was a penitent, and *Grace Abounding* is a Puritan illustration of the wise saying of a recent writer, 'the ordinary man, if he repents at all, repents merely of what he does ; the saint repents of what he is.'¹ Such introspective discipline too often resulted in morbid and melancholy outlook and behaviour which gave rise to the charge of hypocrisy. But the Puritan was as keenly conscious of the evil of his day. He knew that, as Mr. Worldly Wiseman puts it, there were many houses to let in the Town of Morality. He therefore proclaimed to all and sundry the sin of their ways, and pointed to the thunders and threats of Mount Sinai. On all counts, the average Puritan was not likely to be popular. Pepys, for example, although he knew Cambridgeshire so well, and almost certainly heard of Bunyan, never mentions him.

Contemporary prejudice called the Puritans fanatical and uneducated men. Fanatics they may have been, but it is a question whether fanaticism

¹*Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, by Rev. N. P. Williams p. 32. For these paragraphs see specially Trevelyan's *England under the Stuarts*, pp. 58 ff.

is always a crime. When a man's house is on fire, he is fanatic enough to think that nothing in the world matters except getting the fire brigade to the spot. The Puritans saw England perishing, and in season and out, they preached the only way of deliverance. But the charge of ignorance and low culture cannot be upheld. John Pym—King Pym as he was called—was an Oxford man, and studied at the Inns of Court. Of him Clarendon says, 'He was the most popular man, the most able to do hurt that hath lived in any time.' His 'ability' lay in his foresight, statesmanship, and love of liberty. Sir John Eliot, one of the most loveable spirits of his time, was a country gentleman of the best type. Hampden, of 'Ship-money' fame, was educated at Magdalen College, Oxford, and was a member of the Inner Temple. Though he was silent during his first five Parliaments, his character was so upright and his fame so universal, that Macaulay says that, had he lived, he would have been the Washington of England. Oliver Cromwell was a student of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, while John Milton was at Christ's. It is true that these men were the leaders of their party, but most of them were county gentlemen, moving freely among their fellows, and their culture, as well as their political and religious opinions, had great influence. There were others, whose work and life refute the charge of boorish ignorance. Jeremy Taylor and Baxter, among the prophets, and Wither and Herrick and George Herbert among the poets, are instances of culture touched by Puritan influence.

The greatest contribution of the Puritans to the strength of the English character was their propagation of the knowledge of the Bible. In it they themselves meditated day and night. Their speech and writing show the effect of its style. For the ordinary man there was practically no other literature, and the habits of Bible-reading, till recently prevalent in all classes, were the abiding monuments of Puritan teaching. Much emphasis was laid on the ethics of the Old Testament, which were applied as freely to political life as to religious practice. The Bible was the staple of that 'manor-house religion, which,' as Trevelyan says, 'supplied England with Eliots, Hampdens, and Cromwells, and was not seen again until the time when the Evangelicals raised up within the borders of the Church herself another Puritan gentry to rule India and to free the slave.'

The Bible became a popular book. In the days of Henry VIII, Tyndale sounded the death-knell of Popery in England. To a 'learned man,' who said to him, 'We had better be without God's laws than the Pope's,' Tyndale flung down his immortal challenge: 'I defy the Pope and all his laws. If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the Scripture than thou doest.' The boast was made good, and the English versions, culminating in the Authorised Version of 1611, became the model of great writers and the tutor of common folk.

Hence it was that Puritan culture was derived, a culture which was wide-spread and by no means

confined to the squires. The word 'culture' is used advisedly, in the sense of true education of the mind, and it is used on good authority. The Editors of the Government publication on *The Teaching of English in England* (1921) quote Professor Foster Watson: 'John Bunyan and his *Pilgrim's Progress* is the sign and token of an education in the vernacular without the aid of the conscious concentration on the Classics, an education effected by school and home study of the English Bible, which, in the sense of appreciation of good English, is possibly not always surpassed in schools of to-day.' This, 'the most majestic thing in our literature, and the most spiritually living thing we inherit, was for five centuries and more the one great piece of literature which gave something of a common form, a common dignity, to the thought and speech of the people.'¹ This Bible was the daily food of the rank-and-file Puritan.

Of the effect of the reading of the Bible on the imaginative powers of men, something will be said in later chapters.² A few words about its effect on their conscience will bring us to the story of Bunyan's prison experiences.

'Divers portions' of the Scriptures appeal to men differently under differing circumstances, and men therefore lay stress now on this part of the Bible, and now on that. John Wesley, in the eighteenth century, riding through a land stricken with the inertia of ignorant and dull despair, found his message

¹Report, pp. 35, 341 ff.

²Chs. vi and vii.

in the New Testament doctrines of Grace. He preached to all men the good news of salvation by faith, of the rank and privilege of all people who thus became the adopted children of the Most High, and of the possibilities of hope and joy and achievement for those who, by the same faith, received the gift of the Holy Spirit of power. But if the New Testament contained the message for the eighteenth century, the Old Testament was the treasury of the militant Puritans of the seventeenth. They saw the Zion of the Reformed Church threatened from within and without. The lax morals of the Cavaliers who fought for Charles I, and the shiftiness of the King himself, opened up the fire of the Prophets, especially the Minor Prophets, upon them. Ezekiel awoke, in the voice of many a Roundhead serjeant, to tell the clergy and bishops of the Establishment about a valley of dry bones. The Puritans were no enemies, at first, of the Established Church ; and as they saw her in Babylonish captivity, their laments found words in the Psalms of the Exile. 'Arise, O Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered,' was the wild cry of Cromwell's men at Dunbar. When another tack was used by Charles II, and the country was devastated by low morals, and Protestantism was threatened by the intrigues of Rome, the Puritans invoked the Law of marital fidelity, and rebuked their persecutors in language that blistered and scorched. It was in the gentler spirits of the time, such as Baxter and Bunyan himself, that the healing grace of God found its messengers.

The sternness of the Puritans led them to search

deeply into the Old Testament, and the reason is plain. They were intensely patriotic. As against a 'Babylonish' Rome, England was the Lord's Israel. As it had been Israel's duty to hold herself aloof from the rest of the world, in order that, in the Lord's time, the world might say, 'We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you,' so it was England's duty to hold the truth undiluted by any commerce with errors which might come from overseas. Milton held 'that God had revealed Himself, as His manner is, first to His Englishmen.' To the Puritan, therefore, the Stuarts were as guilty as Solomon or Ahab, who brought strange gods into the land.

It is sometimes assumed that the rebellion against the King was a light-hearted affair. Nothing could be further from the truth. 'Men had been willing to resist the King's encroachments on their properties and laws; but when the standard was raised, when the word came round to ride to battle, the case seemed different. Something deeper, if less rational, was touched by the call to arms—the claim of ultimate authority. No other picture of war then lurked in the mind's eye of the Englishman than that of following the King's banner to Hastings, to Crecy or to Flodden. He had been taught no other connexion between religion and public duty but the old text, then painted on the walls of so many manor houses—"Fear God, honour the King." These two duties could not have been divided in men's minds, except by the new Puritan faith. Without the Puritan religion it

could not, in that age at least, have been accomplished.'¹

The Puritan religion, which transferred this deep-rooted loyalty from King to Country, was a religion based on the Old Testament, the Bible of God's ancient people. At its best, at the point of its highest achievement, it was a religion of the fear of God, which banished all other fear from the heart. It is not to be supposed that 'the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ' had no place in Puritan belief and teaching. But in the turmoil and agony of the Civil War, the thing that struck the imagination of men was the likeness between Israel's struggle and their own, and the Book in which they found the story set fire to the imagination and put iron into the conscience of England for centuries after the immediate struggle had ended.

¹G. M. Trevelyan, *England under the Stuarts* p. 232

CHAPTER III

IN PRISON

FROM the preceding pages it will be seen that Bunyan lived in a time of political and religious upheaval, when all the issues at stake were changing in character and enlarging in scope. When Elizabeth died, twenty-five years before Bunyan was born, she left a nation united by two strong bonds. The one was a fervent loyalty to the person of the Monarch. The other was a general loyalty to the Established Church. The strength of both these bonds lay in the fact that they were of the nation's own choosing, and in the time of the great Queen, both Monarch and Church were worthy of the national adherence and support. Elizabeth regarded herself as the Mother of her people, and the Church as their spiritual home, and the people were content to have it so.

With the Stuarts came a change of values and a lowering of tone. In his own view, Charles I was not the Father but the Master of the nation, and Archbishop Laud, as his instrument, spent his life in the effort to uproot the Puritans, who were growing restive within the Church. Under his persecuting administration many of the better educated among them emigrated to America. Had

he succeeded in stamping out the fiery imagination and deep spirituality which were to be found among the poor, *Pilgrim's Progress* would never have been written.

The aims of Charles and his Archbishop were reversed by Cromwell. He was intent, 'with an awful earnestness, on actually having the Gospel taught to England'. He set up Commissions in every county, for the Trial of Public Preachers. All who were approved by these Commissions were licensed. The main result was a generation of 'able, serious Preachers, who lived a godly life, of what tolerable opinion soever they were.'¹ Though persecution had made many Puritan leaders bitterly intolerant, Cromwell himself was wiser. He tried to secure good character and sound evangelicalism (as it was then understood) in the licensed preachers, but he also insisted that they should not use the Prayer-Book. These things assured, he let them loose on the nation. He did not destroy either Churches or parishes, but he put approved men in charge of them. He did not ask to what sect they belonged. Hence it was that we find Gifford, the Independent, installed in the Anglican Church of St. John the Baptist, Bedford. Strangely enough, Bunyan nearly got into trouble with the Commonwealth Government for unauthorized preaching, for we find this entry in the Records of the Church for 1657:

¹ *Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* by Thos. Carlyle, v. pp. 6, ff.

'25th of the 12th Month . . . It is agreed that the 3rd day of the next month be set apart to seek God . . . for our bro Whitbread, who hath been long ill . and for counsaile what to doe with respect to the indictment against bro: Bunyan at ye assizes for preaching at Eaton '¹

But whether 'approved' or unapproved, the Puritans were soon to feel the lash of persecution. In 1660, Charles II returned from exile. He came with promises of toleration on his lips. The nation was delirious with joy. The godly government of Cromwell had been too much for a people that did not love to take its pleasures sadly. They might have guessed that Charles did not mean, or was too lazy to carry out, what he said. The old Cavalier spirit revived, and the Royalists prepared to take their revenge on the Puritan upstarts who had murdered the King, had turned the Church upside down, had forbidden the use of the Prayer Book, and had sold Church emoluments to Commonwealth officers. In the first place, they executed a dozen of the 'regicides' and confiscated the ecclesiastical incomes which Cromwell's men had bought. In so doing, they reduced the 'newly rich' to poverty and restored the power of the hereditary upper class. It is true that, in 1660, they passed the act of Indemnity and Oblivion, but in 1661 began the passing of the Clarendon Code, consisting of five Acts which penalized all who would not subscribe to their membership in

¹ Brown's *Life of Bunyan*, p. 127.

the Established Church. The years of persecution had begun again. With the scales weighted in favour of the Establishment, there began again the struggle between Evangelicalism and Catholicism, Anglo and Roman, which has not yet been decided.

But in the year before official persecution began, some of the county magistrates got busy. Hunting up old statutes of Elizabeth, the justices of Bedford found that the congregation at St. John's Church had no right there, and turned them out. John Bunyan was one of its preachers and leaders, and for some reason these Royalist gentlemen vented their spleen on him. In spite of the Act of Indemnity, this humble tinker was arrested, and was for twelve long years in Bedford Gaol. It was a very insignificant object that lay between hammer and anvil, but out of it the blows shaped one of the mightiest weapons ever used by the Spirit of God.

The story of Bunyan's arrest is worth re-telling. During the last five or six years of Cromwell's rule, he had been a prominent member of the St. John's congregation. His name is frequently mentioned in its records as being entrusted with important business, especially in the matter of interviewing candidates for admission, or persons who were slack in the duties of their membership. He preached far and wide in the country round Bedford. In October, 1660, the magistrates ordered that the Liturgy of the Church of England should be publicly read. Of this order Bunyan took no notice. He would not pray 'after the form of men's inventions.'

In November, 1660, while the magistrates' order was still fresh, Bunyan fulfilled an engagement to conduct a service in a farmhouse at Lower Samsell, thirteen miles south of Bedford, lying to the east of the main Midland line, about a mile north of Harlington station. Arrived at the house, he heard that the law had been set in motion against him. One can imagine his thoughts. He had been called by his fellow members to preach, and had been doing so for four or five years. With the exception to which reference has already been made, the Law had not interfered. He had been greatly used by God, and was gladly heard by the common people with whose tongue he spoke. But now times were changing. He had a trade wherewith to support his family. He could see danger if he persisted in preaching that day, and he could easily escape. But, said he to himself, 'if he who had up to this time showed himself hearty and courageous in his preaching, and had made it his business to encourage others, were now to run and make an escape, it would be of an ill savour in the country. If he ran before a warrant, others would run before words and threats.' So he resolved to go forward and see the business through.

He had just begun the service with prayer, when the constable arrived with the warrant, and carried Bunyan off to Harlington House, the residence of the magistrate, Mr Francis Wingate, who was not at home. The preacher was lodged in the house of a friend, who promised that he should be forthcoming the next day. When he appeared, Mr.

Wingate asked him why he did not stick to his tinkering, and declared that he would break up these unlawful meetings. The accused must either find bail for his good behaviour, or go to gaol. But Bunyan refused to be bailed, for he declared that nothing could stop his preaching if he went free. Even when Wingate and his brother-in-law tried to make him promise 'not to call the people together' to hear him—for John had said that the people came without calling—Bunyan refused the words, for he knew that he would violate the spirit of the promise. So the authority for arrest was issued, and on the second morning after the famous service, he and the constable tramped the thirteen miles to Bedford gaol, 'carrying the peace of God with me, and His comfort in my poor soul.'¹

Dr. John Brown gives an interesting side-light here upon the after history of the Wingate family. In the magistrate's house there were nine children. The eldest was a boy then eleven years old, who was called, after his father, Francis. He was knighted in 1672, the year in which Bunyan came out of prison. Sir Francis married the daughter of Lord Anglesey, Lady Anne Annesley. Lord Anglesey had a cousin, a Nonconformist minister, Dr. Samuel Annesley, the father of Susannah Wesley, to whom, therefore Lady Anne was a second cousin. Sir Francis died in 1690, and Lady Anne's Nonconformist connexion showed itself in her children, three of whom became members of the

¹Venables, *Life of Bunyan*, p. 86 f.

Church at the Old Meeting in Bedford, of which Church Bunyan had been minister. Thus, says Dr. Brown with an almost audible chuckle, Bunyan took a kind of ' holy revenge ' on the man who had sent him to Bedford gaol.

From the day of his arrest, in November, 1660, to January, 1661, efforts were made by his friends for Bunyan's release on bail. They failed, and he had to continue in uncertainty till the January Quarter Sessions. He writes, ' Here I lie waiting the good Will of God to do with me as He pleaseth, knowing that not one hair of my head can fall to the ground without the Will of my Father who is in heaven ; let the rage and malice of men be what they may, they can do no more and go no farther than God permits them , and even when they have done their worst, we know that all things work together for good for them that love God.'

Sir John Kelynge was Chairman of the Quarter Sessions which met in January 1661. He was a man of violently anti-Dissent opinions. He had once fined a jury a hundred marks apiece for acquitting a few poor people who had met for worship, with Bibles, but without a Prayer Book, which, said he, ' had been ever since the Apostles' time,' and so ought always to be used ! He asked Bunyan what was his authority for preaching. The accused replied that he was following the direction of St. Peter, that men should minister as each had received the gift. Justice Kelynge interpreted that Scripture differently, as meaning ' if any man have received a gift of tinkering, as thou hast done,

let him follow his tinkering.' So the argument went on, till the Justice stopped it by saying that Bunyan was to go to prison for three months. If after that term, he did not submit to go to church and leave his preaching, he would be banished. If he were found in the country after that, without the King's special licence, he would be hung.¹ 'So being again delivered up to the gaoler's hands, I was had home to prison again.'

During these three months there were grave disturbances in London. The Fifth-Monarchy men rose against the King's Government, with the object of setting up the Kingdom of Christ. They were shot down in the streets, and men said that, with the death of the last veterans who would not accept the established order, 'the lion sprawled its last.' But the outbreak stirred up panic and persecution all over the country. All sectaries were potential rebels in the eyes of the authorities.² The Clerk of the Peace of Bedford, Mr. Cobb, came to see whether Bunyan would conform, and so earn his release. He was kindly and, from his own point of view, reasonable. But to all his arguments Bunyan replied, 'Sir, the law hath provided two ways of obeying ; the one to do that which I, in my conscience, do believe that I am bound to do actively ; and where I cannot obey actively I am willing to lie down and suffer what they shall do unto me. At this he sat still and said no more ; which when he had done I did thank him for his civil and meek

¹Brown, pp. 151 f: Rutherford, *John Bunyan*, p. 40.

²Trevelyan, op. cit. p. 336.

discoursing with me ; and so we parted. Oh that we might meet in heaven.' In that prison interview, intolerant law clashed with the Puritan spirit. Cobb, it is true, was of the better sort of churchman; but Kelynge, who had already been the prosecuting counsel against Sir Harry Vane, was the champion of intolerance. He prepared the Act of Uniformity in 1662. But his cause was doomed to ultimate failure, and he himself to-day stands pilloried in the person of Lord Hate-good of Vanity Fair.

At the coronation of Charles II in 1661, many Puritans who were in prison were set free. But Bunyan was not among them. Under a persecuting and unjust law, he lay in the gaol from April to August. Then came the Assizes, when Sir Matthew Hale and Judge Twisden were on circuit. To these men Elizabeth, Bunyan's second wife, presented a petition that his case might be heard in open court. Hale was at least sympathetic, but Twisden angrily replied that nothing could be done till the prisoner promised not to preach. 'My Lord,' said the fearless woman, 'he dares not leave preaching as long as he can speak.' She told Sir Matthew how she had suffered from the shock of her husband's arrest, for it caused her child to be still-born. She also told him how she had journeyed all the way to London and had seen Lord Barkwood, who had got some brother peers to advise her to appeal to the Judges. Hither, then, she had come, appealing for justice, though she was driven to say that, because he was a tinker and a poor man, she did not hope that

his case would be heard. But, no, he was a 'pestilent fello^v,' said Twisden; he ran about the country instead of supporting his wife and the four children, and he must stay where he was till he came to a better mind. Bunyan writes, 'So was I hindered and prevented from appearing before the judge, and left in prison.' He remained there till 1672, with one brief interval of liberty in 1666.

It is extremely probable that Bunyan was saved from a worse fate by being kept in prison. Whatever the reason for his continued confinement, God had a greater work for him to do. He would certainly have got into trouble had he been free, for he himself told the judges 'that he would repeat the offence the first time he could.' As events turned out, he was given time to dream his dreams, and to interpret to himself and to the world the meaning and method of the high calling of God to the adventure of the Christian life.

On the testimony of John Howard, himself a native of Bedford, the prisoners in the county gaol of that town were saved from some of the unspeakable horrors which marked the majority of such places in his day. Yet when all is said, the loss of liberty for twelve years implies no small suffering. Reference has already been made to Bunyan's anxiety about his wife and children. To their support he contributed by making many hundred gross of 'long-tagg'd laces.' Certainly some occupation for hand and mind was needed. He was only thirty-two years of age, a man of strong affections, labouring always under a sense of the

injustice of a law that bound his conscience down. Had he found nothing to do, he would have gone mad.

It appears that his treatment varied with his gaolers. Sometimes they were cruel and oppressive, but he had many friends in the town, and, on the whole, he seems to have fared better than we might expect. He was allowed to have some books, and a friend who visited him at one time says, 'He had the least and best library that ever I saw, consisting only of two books, the Bible, and *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*.' With regard to the last-named, there is a copy of the first edition (1641) in the library of the Literary and Scientific Institute at Bedford, which contains the name, John Bunyan, written in capitals at the foot of each title page of its three volumes. Whether this is the actual prison companion of Bunyan, Dr. Brown does not say, but it would appear probable.

In 1666, Bunyan obtained release for a few weeks. It was the year of the Great Plague, and of the Fire of London. Pepys draws a terrible picture of both, especially of the Plague. It spread panic throughout England. It is possible that prisoners were dismissed in order that the gaols might not become centres of infection. But it is certain that in that year there began a change of feeling about the Puritans, whom Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, had so bitterly oppressed by his 'Code.' In 1665, began the second Dutch War, which went steadily against England. British ships in the Medway were fired by the enemy. The Catholic King of France, Louis XIV, was a passive ally of Holland,

Men feared a French invasion, and a general massacre of Protestants. Pepys sets down the fact that, in these days, 'It is strange how everybody do now-a-days reflect upon Oliver, and commend him, what brave things he did, and made all the neighbour princes fear him'; and, a year later, 'the business of abusing the Puritans begins to grow stale, and of no use, they being the people that, at last, will be found wisest.'¹ Hyde fell in 1667, but any relief that Bunyan may have enjoyed through the revulsion of national sentiment was short-lived, for we find him back in prison, for preaching, in 1666. Of the second half of his captivity we know little. He was released, under the Declaration of Indulgence, in 1672.

In his prison-experiences, Bunyan is the personification of the Puritan spirit. Like his brethren, he held that every man has the right of direct approach to God. As a consequence, he believed that God would not refuse the appeal of any believing and penitent soul. To the first article of this practical creed he held with the courage of which proof has been given above. The second, his belief in the willing ear of God, is shown in his 'Brief Account of his Imprisonment.' He tells how he 'never had in all his life so great an inlet into the Word of God as now.' 'I never knew what it was for God to stand by me at all turns, as I have found him since I came in hither.' He was anxious for his family, but reflected that 'if I should

¹Trevelyan, op. cit. pp. 353 ff. Pepys, July 12, 1667 and September 4, 1668.

venture all for God, I engaged God to take care of my concernsments.' While he was yet 'a young prisoner,' the fear came on him that he 'might end at the gallows,' and, in so doing, show an unmanly terror which would belie his profession. But he considered that 'I might not choose whether I would hold my profession, or no—I was bound, but God was free; yea 'twas my duty to stand to His word, whether He would ever look upon me, or save me at the last. Wherefore, thought I, I am for going on and venturing my eternal state with Christ, whether I have comfort here or no. Lord Jesus, if Thou wilt catch me, do; if not, I will venture for Thy Name.'

Of all that he learned in prison he says, 'I would not have been without this trial for much I am comforted every time I think of it, and I hope I shall bless God for ever for the teaching I have had by it. These out of the spoils won in battle have I dedicated to maintain the house of God.'

Unconsciously, Bunyan put the Puritan spirit into a verse, written in prison :

For though men keep my outward man
Within their bolts and bars,
Yet, by the faith of Christ, I can
Mount higher than the stars

Shakespeare, in quite another connexion, shows the stuff of which such heroes are made.

Nor stony towers, nor walls of beaten brass,
Nor airless dungeon, nor strong links of iron,
Can be retentive to the strength of spirit.

CHAPTER IV

BISHOP BUNYAN

THE prison in which Bunyan spent twelve of the most valuable years of his life was the county gaol of Bedford. It was inspected by John Howard, and described by him in his *State of the Prisons in England and Wales*, published in 1785. The gaol was taken down in 1801, and its barred door may still be seen, built into the wall of the vestibule in the Old Meeting Church. Bunyan passed through that door, in 1672, and for three years was a free man. His release had come about in reply to a petition sent to the King, who had in this year issued a Declaration of Indulgence, a Declaration which was suspect, as designed to help the Catholics rather than the Protestant Dissenters. Whatever its design may have been, the Bedford Congregation took full advantage of it, for on May 9, they obtained the King's licence for 'John Bunyan' to be a recognized 'teacher of the Congregation allowed by Us in the House of Josias Roughed, of Bedford, for the use of such as doe not conforme to the Church of England, who are of the Perswasion commonly called Congregationall.' The same document gives permission for Bunyan to teach in all other similar places licensed by the King.

When he obtained his freedom, Bunyan found his business gone to wrack and ruin, and that he must start life anew. Once more, God opened the way. The young pastor of the Church, John Burton, had died shortly before the congregation was turned out of St John's, and the people had neither meeting-house nor minister for many years. During that time, they had frequent opportunities for observing Bunyan's stedfastness. *Grace Abounding* had been written in prison, and published half-way through the term of his captivity. The mark of the Lord Jesus was upon him, and just before his release he was elected by the whole congregation as its pastor. The place in which he was to minister was a barn in an orchard, purchased by Josias Ruffhead, in Mill Lane. The noble church which to-day is the home of the 'Old Meeting' stands on the same site.

Such a pastor as Bunyan could not be content to spend his energy on one small congregation. He had years of lost time to make up. It is not surprising, therefore, to find him taking full advantage of the King's clemency. There is a document in his hand-writing in the Record Office in London, in which he made application, in May, 1672, for licences to be granted for thirty buildings and twenty-five preachers. The list of buildings touches the counties of Bedford (19), Northants (3), Bucks (3), Cambridge (2) and Herts (1). Most of the preachers came from the Old Meeting or its dependent branches, a fact which speaks much for the intelligence and burning zeal of these persecuted

Puritans. On October 6, 1672, Bunyan himself is found presenting to the Mayor of Leicester his licence to preach in a house nearly opposite to St. Nicholas' Church. In the following century John Wesley spent a night in the same house.

When the new meeting place in Mill Lane was opened, and Bunyan preached there for the first time, it was 'so thronged that many were constrained to stay without; every one that was of his persuasion striving to partake of his instructions.' It has often been disputed whether his ministry and practice was of the Baptist or Congregational order, as we now understand those terms. We have little light, so far as the Act Book of the Church is concerned. There were in London brethren of the strict order who wished to insist on immersion as a condition of communion, and with them Bunyan had some controversy. But he seems to have had no strong convictions either way, though he acknowledges that he is called a Baptist, and even an 'Anabaptist.' But he writes that he 'will not let Water Baptism be the rule, the door, the bolt, the bar, the wall of division between the righteous and the unrighteous.'¹

The Bedford Church insisted on character, much more than upon questions of ritual. Even in such a flock there were black sheep. Here are cases which must have caused the pastor grave anxiety:

'At a full assembly of the Congregation was with joint consent of the whole body, cast out of the Church, John Rush, of Bedford, for being drunk

¹Brown, p. 237.

above the ordinery rate of drunkards, for he could not be carried home from the Swan to his own house without the help of no less than three persons who, when they had brought him home, could not present him as one alive to his familie, he was so dead drunke.' It was no slight ordeal to appear before such a tribunal, for a diligent eye was kept on card-players, and on such as one 'Eliz Burntwood for her immodest company keeping with carnal and light young fellows at Elstow.'

'Bishop Bunyan,' as he was called, had a wide diocese. Upon him was laid the care of little communities in all the counties round Bedford. Traditions of his visits linger in many places to this day. At Royston, in Herts, a dozen miles south of Cambridge, it is said that the Church was founded by a student who chanced to hear the great preacher at Melbourne, two miles away. At a farm near Luton, there was a secret meeting room, reached by a trap door in the roof. There the saints assembled by night 'for fear of the Jews.' We can picture Bunyan coming over the rough roads, knocking at the farmhouse door, entering and climbing to that upper room, and there speaking his message of comfort and courage. Near Hitchin there was Wainwood Dell, a place strongly reminiscent of the wilds where the Covenanters met for the strengthening of their persecuted faith. In these, and countless other places, Bunyan was known and loved.

We have seen that Bunyan regarded himself as called to be a messenger of God. 'Woe is me, if

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100. *W. M. D.*

COPY OF WARRANT FOR THE ARREST OF
JOHN BUNYAN.

(For translation of above see page 126)

'I preach not the Gospel,' was the motto of his life, and no threat or penalty could stop him. Even prison life had given to him, as to St. Paul, many opportunities to speak in the Name of the Lord Jesus. Bedford Gaol was often crowded to excess. But in those days of persecution, room was sometimes suddenly to be found for more. On one occasion, the officers of the law had surprised a night meeting in Keysoe Wood, gathered by John Donne, the recently ejected rector of Pertenhall. Donne and his sixty hearers were incontinently marched off to prison, where they found Bunyan, calm amid the confusion, ready at once to speak words of comfort. Says one who knew him there, 'In the midst of the hurry which so many new comers occasioned, I have heard Mr. Bunyan both preach and pray with that mighty Spirit of Faith and Plerophory of Divine Assistance, that has made me stand and wonder.' We may be sure that John did not call this power, Plerophory.

We have a vivid description, happily preserved for us by Dr. Brown, of Bunyan's personal appearance. It may usefully be compared with the frontispiece of this volume. 'As for his person, he was tall of stature, strong-boned, though not corpulent, somewhat of a ruddy face, with sparkling eyes, wearing his hair on his upper lip, after the old British fashion; his hair reddish, but in his latter days time had sprinkled it with grey; his nose well set, but not declining or bending, and his mouth moderately large; his forehead something high, and his habit always plain and modest. . . . He

appeared in countenance to be of a stern and rough temper, but in his conversation mild and affable, not given to loquacity or much discourse in company, unless some urgent occasion required it. He had a sharp, quick eye, accomplished with an excellent discerning of persons, being of good judgement and quick wit'

We have already seen a specimen of his gentler teaching in the extract from *Come and Welcome to Jesus Christ*, which book is, like most of his writings, an expanded sermon. Now, with that 'sharp, quick eye' upon us, let us hear a section from the book sent out from Bedford Prison in 1663, whose title is *The Holy City; or the New Jerusalem*. The twelve gates of the city, three to each point of the compass, show that God hath a people in every corner of the world. The twelve foundations bear the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, and the right preacher is he who teaches their doctrine. The gates are each 'one several and entire pearl,' showing that none can enter in but by Christ, and only by a whole Christ. There is but one street in this city, for at last the saints shall walk in one way, and in one light. 'It is Antichrist that hath brought in all these crossings, bye-lanes and odd nooks that to this day many an honest heart doth greatly lose itself in.' Men must have pure hearts for that golden street. 'It is not every clown, with his clumping, dirty shoes, that is admitted into the King's privy chambers and private palaces. The men who shall walk that street must be golden men with golden hearts, with

graces that are much more precious than of gold that perisheth.'

Even more searching are these lines from a later book, *The Barren Fig-tree, or the Doom and Down-fall of the Fruitless Professor* (1682). 'When a man hath got a profession and is crowded into the house and church of God, the question is not now, hath he life, hath he right principles? but, Hath he fruit?' (From the lips of such a preacher hear the hammer blows of those three words.) 'He came seeking fruit thereon. It mattereth not who brought thee in hither, whether God or the Devil or thine own vain-glorious heart; but hast thou fruit? What do men meddle with religion for? Why do they call themselves by the name of the Lord Jesus, if they have not the Grace of God? What do they in the vineyard? Let them work or get them out, the vineyard must have labourers in it. God expecteth fruit that will answer, and be worthy of the repentance which thou feignest thyself to have.'

All kinds of people came to hear this fiery preacher. At Melbourne, near Royston, Bunyan 'being to preach in this country village, and the people being gathered together in the churchyard, a Cambridge scholar, and none of the soberest of them neither, enquired what was the meaning of that concourse of people (it being upon a week-day), and being told that one Bunyan, a tinker, was to preach there, he gave a boy twopence to hold his horse, saying, "He was resolved to hear the tinker prate, and so he went into the Church to hear him." Dr. Brown thinks

this Cambridge student may have been the convert who afterwards founded the church at Royston.

In the addition to *Grace Abounding*, the writer tells of instances of Bunyan's quick wit. 'He nonplussed one who came to oppose him in his congregation by demanding whether or no he had the original Scriptures,' and if not, what right had he to preach? Bunyan replied by asking if his questioner had the said originals 'No,' said he, 'but he had what he knew to be true copies.' 'And I,' said Bunyan, 'believe the English Bible to be a true copy also.' Another, (this time the University Librarian) accused him of uncharitableness for saying it was very hard for most to be saved, thereby going about to exclude most of his congregation. But he confuted him by quoting our Saviour's sermon out of the ship, and showing that there were four kinds of ground into which good seed fell, and that only one brought forth good fruit. These were the Lord's own words. Did his opponent accuse Him of uncharitableness?

Bunyan knew, and was known in the London of his day. He himself tells us that, between the autumn Assizes of 1661 and those in the Spring of 1662, though he was a prisoner, 'I had by my Jailor some liberty granted me, more than at the first, and I did go to see Christians at London.' When his prison days were ended, he went to London frequently. He was intimate with Dr John Owen, the eminent Puritan divine, who told the King that he would willingly exchange his learning for the tinker's power of touching men's hearts.

Of this power, Charles Doe, Bunyan's first biographer writes, 'When Mr. Bunyan preached in London, if there were but one day's notice given, there would be more people come together to hear him preach than the meeting-house could hold. I computed about three thousand that came to hear him one Lord's Day at London, at a town's-end meeting house, so that half were fain to go back again for want of room, and then himself was fain at a back-door to be pulled almost over people to get upstairs to his pulpit.' Among the well known people who came to listen to Bunyan, Dr. Brown mentions five names of persons known to Samuel Pepys,¹ a fact that makes it all the more remarkable that the great gossip should not have heard of the preaching tinker, who was known in London before the famous diary closed in 1669.

It was always an adventure to go to London, and Bunyan's familiarity with the City may have begun when he was a soldier. If so, here may lie the clue to a mysterious reference in *Grace Abounding*. 'Once,' he says, 'I fell into a creek of the sea, and hardly escaped drowning.' The sea is a long way from Bedford. But when the tide runs, Thames water is salt, and Bunyan may have got a mouthful of it in the harum-scarum days of the youth of which he writes in this passage. Thames-side would seem to him like 'a creek of the sea.'

We have seen that Bunyan was released under the terms of the Declaration of Indulgence in 1672.

¹Brown, p. 383, and compare the list with index to *Pepys' Diary*

He remained at liberty for three years. During that time his fame and influence spread very rapidly. A census taken in 1676 showed that in the diocese of Lincoln—which then included Bedford—the Nonconformists numbered 1 in 21 of the people, while in Bedford itself the proportion was 1 in 10. This success was largely due to Bunyan's influence. It is not surprising that, when the Declaration was withdrawn in 1673, his enemies began again to bestir themselves. William Foster, who had taken a part in Bunyan's first conviction, even while professing a friendly anxiety for him, had already tried 1400 Nonconformists, mostly from the villages of Bedfordshire. A system of spying, mentioned in *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman*, was brought into action. In 1676 the blow fell on Bunyan himself. The warrant then issued for his arrest came to light again a few years ago. This time he was taken to the prison on the bridge-head at Bedford, and remained there for six months. He was released through the good offices of his friend, John Owen, who pleaded his cause with Dr. Barlow, the time-serving Bishop of Lincoln. During those six months, the First Part of *Pilgrim's Progress* was written.

For twelve years more Bunyan was free, and was found in labours more abundant. He was constantly in danger from the persecuting Anglican Church of that day. But the greatest peril of all arose when James II came to the throne. The new King was a Catholic, and was pledged to restore the supremacy of Rome in England. He saw that

This could not be done until Parliament was purged of its Anglican members, who were even more fiercely opposed to Papacy than to Puritanism. The King therefore resolved to offer a bait to the Nonconformists. He issued a Declaration of Indulgence to all Dissenters. Then he organized a system of 'regulators', under a committee of seven privy councillors, of whom Judge Jeffreys was the only Protestant. These men were to co-operate with local men in the municipalities in seeing that the electors returned to Parliament men who would vote for the repeal of statutes that pressed hardly on all non-Anglicans. Bunyan was one of the local men of Bedford chosen by the authorities to nominate a new corporation, and six or seven were members of his own congregation. But he would not go as far as the King desired. He saw through the tricky purpose of the Monarch, and perceived 'that all the advantages that could redound to the Dissenters would have been no more than what Polyphemus would have allowed Ulysses—namely that he would eat his men first, and do him the favour of being eaten last.' The new corporation was unmanageable, and the 'regulators' tried to bribe Bunyan to persuade them to serve the King's purpose. They little knew their man. Had the whole business not been stopped by the acquittal of the Bishops and the flight of James, there is no doubt that Bunyan would have refused to purchase freedom for Nonconformists by the destruction of his brother-Englishmen of the Established Church.

Throughout these last years of his life Bunyan

was busy with his pen. The chief results were the Second Part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman*, *The Holy War*, and *The Jerusalem Sinner Saved*. His journeyings were incessant. Family anxieties were heavy as he contemplated the possibility of another arrest. As a precaution he made a deed of gift of all his worldly goods in favour of his wife. The document is in the possession of the Old Meeting at Bedford. The estate amounted to £42 19s. od.

His friend and biographer tells the story of his last journey, in the addendum to *Grace Abounding*. A young man, a neighbour of Bunyan's, happened to be in the displeasure of his father, who threatened to disinherit him. So Bunyan rode all the way to the father's dwelling in Reading, and there used such pressing arguments against anger and passion that father and son were reconciled. Then Bunyan returned to London through pitiless rain. He arrived, drenched and weary, at the house of one Mr. Strudock, a grocer, at the Star, on Snow Hill, in the parish of St Sepulchre. He preached on the Sunday, but exposure brought on fever and ten days later, on August 31, 1688, he died, and so 'followed his pilgrim from the City of Destruction to the New Jerusalem, his better part having been all along there.' He sleeps in Bunhill Fields Cemetery, almost opposite Wesley's Chapel in City Road.

CHAPTER V

'PILGRIM'S PROGRESS': A MAP OF THE ROAD

DURING Bunyan's first imprisonment he wrote several books, most of them expanded sermons. For our present purpose, one of these works is of particular importance. *Grace Abounding*, published in 1666, is a prelude to *Pilgrim's Progress*. In it we see Experience gathering together material which Imagination was afterwards to work up into the writer's masterpiece. One who first reads the *Progress*, and then turns to *Grace Abounding*, will recognize that Christian is a real person, no other than Bunyan himself, as he once was, is now, and hopes to be when he comes to the inevitable River.

It is not possible here to enlarge on the vital connexion of these two works by minute analysis. But a reference to the Preface to *Grace Abounding* will prove the point. Bunyan was a man of the Road, and plied his trade from place to place. In the *Progress*, therefore, he will presently give his interpretation of the Christian life under a series of pictures, showing a man who travels a long road,

meets with adventures, encounters grim opposition, gets into a giant's castle, converses with friends, passes through shadows of depression, and finally by the help of God, arrives. These are pictures drawn by the imagination. But they are not imaginary, they are pictorial facts. The facts are in *Grace Abounding*.

But already in the latter work, and especially in the Preface, we find Experience calling in the help of Imagination. Bunyan writes to his 'children,' his converts and fellow-believers, from prison. He is 'in the lion's den, and the mountain of leopards.' He is sending out this book as a testimony to the praise of the glory of God's grace, 'extended to such a wretch as I.' For he had been a long time 'at Sinai, to see the fire, and the cloud, and the darkness.' He recalls his wanderings in the wilderness, his great sins and great temptations. The remembrance of Divine grace is to him like 'a drop of that honey that I have taken out of the carcass of a lion,' and because of what grace has done, 'I can remember my fears and doubts and sad months with comfort; they are as the head of Goliath in my hand.'

But in the last two paragraphs of this Preface, Experience puts on the brake. 'My dear children, call to mind the former days. Remember the word that first laid hold of you. Have you forgot the close, the milk-house, the stable, the barn, and the like where God did visit your souls? If you have sinned against light, if you think God fights against you, or if heaven is hidden from your eyes, remember

it was thus with me ; but out of them all the Lord delivered me.' Experience holds Imagination true to facts. 'God did not play in tempting of me ; neither did I play when I sank as into a bottomless pit ; wherefore I may not play in relating of these things, but be plain and simple, and lay down the thing as it was.' *Grace Abounding* is actual history.

It was during his first imprisonment that Bunyan thus records how God has set free his soul. Ten years were to pass, six of them still in prison, and four years in strenuous work in his wide 'diocese.' Then came prison again for six months. He had no choice but to rest. At the same time his mind was free to work. His little cage stood at the end of the bridge that crossed the Ouse. It is quite possible that he could see the traffic that passed in and out of the town. Readers of Jusserand's *English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages* will recall his description of such bridges, and of the people who used them. Times and customs had not so greatly changed, as to render Jusserand's pictures inapplicable to the main features of the seventeenth century. Bunyan would watch the pedlar and the merchant, the fop and the beggar, the justice and the criminal, the soldier and the lady of fashion, the friends in earnest conversation, and all the busy life that made up Bedford's humanity. What else should the sight suggest but the Road ? He would turn it to spiritual uses

Should it be a sermon ?

When at the first I took my pen in hand,
 Thus for to write, I did not understand
 That I at all should make a little book
 In such a mode nay, I had undertook
 To make another, which, when almost done,
 Before I was aware, I thus begun.

No ; the sound of those travelling feet beat any sermon out of his head. He fell to wishing that he himself were on the road he loved so well, for there is nothing in all the world like the joy of tramping along the highway.

And thus it was I, writing of the way
 And race of saints in this our gospel-day,
 Fell suddenly into an allegory
 About their journey, and the way to glory,
 In more than twenty things, which I set down
 And they again began to multiply
 Like sparks that from the coals of fire do fly
 Nay then, thought I, if that you breed so fast
 I'll put you by yourselves, lest you at last
 Should prove *ad infinitum*, and eat out
 The book that I already am about.

Bunyan has told us that he did not ' play ' in writing *Grace Abounding*. But he thoroughly enjoyed himself when he wrote *Pilgrim's Progress*.

Neither did I but vacant seasons spend
 In this my scribble, nor did I intend
 But to divert myself, in doing this,
 From worser thoughts, which make me do amiss.

In short, like the masterpieces of music, this book may be said to have written itself. Experience, musing, reading, and abounding joy in God had made Bunyan what Bacon styles ' a full man.'

Thus I set pen to paper with delight,
And quickly had my thoughts in black and white.
For having now my method by the end,
Still as I pull'd, it came, and so I pens'd
It down : until it came to be,
For length and breadth, the bigness which you see

When it was finished, he showed the work to his pious friends. Some of them approved, and some were shocked.

Some said, John, print it ; others said, Not so :
Some said, It might do good ; others said, No

Wise men they were who said, 'Print it.' But John was the wisest of them all, for he took his own course

Now was I in a strait, and did not see
Which was the best thing to be done by me
At last I thought, since you are thus divided,
I print it will, and so the case decided.

There is surely no excuse for being without a copy of this book. There are editions of all sorts and prices, not the least attractive being the six-penny edition, illustrated, published by the Religious Tract Society. But it would be wise here to attempt to make a kind of verbal map of the Road that leads from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City.

'The road is as straight as a rule can make it.' That definite statement is not made till Christian is well on his journey, but the directness of the way is implied by delicate touches from the very beginning. In the City of Destruction, where

Christian's home is, and where most men dwell at ease, Christian has the itch of the traveller in his feet and in his heart, but he wanders around, looking this way and that way. Then Evangelist meets him, and points across the desolate plain to the Wicket-gate. The pilgrim, though his back is loaded, begins to run. He has found the road. At first he has company, for Obstinate, who honestly thinks that Christian is mad, and Pliable, pursue him and go a little way with him. After Obstinate has turned back, the other two talk of the glories of the place where the road ends, Pliable with great optimism and pleasure, Christian with a dawning hope. Then, suddenly, they are in the Slough of Despond.

Now Christian runs on alone, till Mr Worldly Wiseman turns him aside by promising to show him 'a better way, and short, not so attended with difficulties' as is the straight road. On this short cut via the Town of Morality he comes to the terrors of Sinai, and once more is turned back and set in the straight road by Evangelist. So he comes at last to the Wicket-gate, and to Good-will, who describes the route for him 'Are there no turnings or windings, by which a stranger may lose his way?' 'Yes,' replied Good-will, 'there are many ways abut down upon this, and they are crooked and wide; but thus thou mayest distinguish the right from the wrong, the right only being straight and narrow.'

It was but a short distance from the Gate to the House of the Interpreter. Here the traveller

is delayed, and instructed by acted parables that teach him to reckon the dangers and the cost of the journey. After a while, feeling the weight of the burden on his back, he asks if it is not time to go on his way now? But he must see one more thing, and it is the dreamer who trembled in his sleep because he had seen the Judgement Day. With this vision, and with the Interpreter's farewell—'The Comforter be always with thee, good Christian, to guide thee in the way that leads to the City'—still fresh in his mind, the Pilgrim runs on, and comes breathless to the Cross. Losing his burden here, he gives 'three leaps for joy,' and goes on singing.

Henceforward, Christian is hardly ever alone. He comes across Simple, Sloth, and Presumption, 'a little out of the way,' asleep. He tries to wake them—one of the few touches of aggressive evangelism for which Bunyan finds room in this tale. Formalist and Hypocrisy tumble over a wall into the Way, but are scared and lost in an attempt to get round Hill Difficulty, up which the Pilgrim 'scrabbles' alone. At the top, Mistrust and Timorous try to turn him back with news of lions a little further on, and he has to go back a little to fetch the Roll of Comfort forgotten in the Arbour. It is late and dark when he passes the lions ('chained, but he saw not the chains') and so to the Palace Beautiful.

From this point in the story, Christian goes armed. He has need, for in the Valley of Humiliation he well nigh loses his life in fighting Apollyon, and emerges, victorious but wounded, only to find

himself in the demon-haunted Valley of the Shadow of Death, with deep dykes on each side of him Passing the cave of Giants Pagan and Pope (let it be noted that they are classed together), he overtakes Faithful, whose encounters (with Madame Wanton, Adam the First, and bold-faced Shanie) are so different from Christian's besetments. As they converse, they fall in with Talkative, and so come, with comforting words from their 'good friend Evangelist,' to Vanity Fair. Here they are put in prison (Christian's first experience of it, as Doubting Castle is the second), and Faithful is martyred after a trial that reminds one of Justice Twisden.

Hence Christian escapes, and is joined by Hopeful. Leaving Mr. By-ends, with his friends, to turn aside to the silver mine where stood Demas ('gentleman-like'), they pass the warning pillar that was Lot's wife. A little beyond this plain, they refresh themselves at the River of Life. (There is only one other River in the story.) But after that is By-path Meadow and Doubting Castle. After half a week in prison, they escape to the Delectable Mountains and the kindly Shepherds, who show them, through 'the glass,' the Celestial City, to which they could hardly look for the shaking of their hands. Again going forward, they meet with Ignorance, but soon leave him behind, with a half hint of their own superiority. But presently, they find themselves in the Flatterer's net, for which they are chastised. Sadder and wiser, they pass safely over the Enchanted Ground, where Ignorance overtakes them again. But now they are

near the end, for they find themselves in the Land of Beulah, which is bordered by the River, on the other side of which is the Celestial City. Sinking and swimming, they cross to the other side, and go with Shining Ones up the hill to the gates. All the bells in the city rang as they entered, 'and after that, they shut up the gates which when I had seen, I wished myself among them'

The amazing success of the story of Christian moved some to try to imitate, or to complete, the tale Bunyan himself therefore took the matter in hand, and in 1685, published the Second Part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. It tells how Christian's wife and four sons, with their friend, Mercy, followed him to the Celestial City. Nine years had passed since Christian's story was written, and Bunyan summarizes it by making an old man, Mr Sagacity, relate its chief features to the dreamer. Mr Sagacity speaks of what happened up to the time when Christiana, moved by thoughts of her husbands' late afflictions and present happiness, breaks away from her scoffing neighbours, and starts with her party on the Road. Then he leaves Bunyan 'to dream out his dream by himself'. The Slough of Despond safely passed, all get through the Wicket-gate without difficulty, save that Mercy is held back a little by the thought of her unworthiness, and by terror of Beelzebub's dog. As they go on, 'in comfortable weather,' to the Interpreter's House, they are molested by ruffians, but they are delivered, and safely arrive. Here they linger for a long time, which is filled by visions and conversations, which

sometimes become a little tedious. But when they start once more, they are convoyed by Great-heart.

There is no explicit mention of their seeing the Cross, but they see the three men, who had slept, 'a little out of the way,' when Christian passed, hanging in chains. They had turned out of the way pilgrims, such as Short-wind, Sleepy-head, a young woman whose name was Dull. Pressing on, they climb what the panting Christiana calls 'the breathing hill,' Difficulty, which makes one of the children cry. Great-heart takes his hand, and so they come over against the lions. Here is one whom Christian did not see, Giant Grim. He had so frightened pilgrims that 'the way of late had been much unoccupied, and was almost all grown over with grass.' Great-heart slays him, and they come with trembling to the Palace Beautiful, and for the time their guide leaves them. During the long period spent here, the boys have to learn and go through their catechism, Mercy is sued for by Mr. Brisk, and the children's ailments are treated by Dr. Skill, who, in the matter of fees about which Christiana is doubtful, 'hopes he shall be reasonable.'

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As they are about to start again, Great-heart rejoins them, and they go down into the Valley of Humiliation. But it is changed since Christian's day. Great-heart had known 'many labouring men that have got good estates in it. Some also have wished that the next (nearest) way to their Father's house were here, that they might be troubled no more with either hills or mountains to go over;

but the way is the way, and there is an end.' In the Valley of the Shadow, 'longer than the other,' they are hard put to it, but God sent light and deliverance, and at the end of it Great-heart, after a terrific fight, slays Giant Maul Falling in with Mr Honest, 'an old pilgrim, asleep under an oak,' they converse with him about Mr Fearing, whose story is told with such careful detail that one might suppose him to be Bunyan's favourite character.

There is no wonder that the weary women and children are glad at their reception in the house of Gaius, a house 'that is kept for none but pilgrims.' Here for a long period they stay, and the author, possibly remembering youthful readers, gives details of their repasts. He introduces a little sentimental romance by marrying Mercy to the eldest son of Christiana. To celebrate the occasion, Bunyan makes his men-folk divert themselves by killing Giant Slay-good, and rescuing Mr. Feeble-mind, who finds a 'suitable companion' in one Mr. Ready-to-halt with his crutches. So they go on to Vanity Fair, a town so greatly changed that in it they find honour for being brave enough to go on pilgrimage. Religion has become respectable. A whole month passes ere they leave the house of Mr Mnason, the 'old disciple,' who lives in Vanity Fair.

When they come to By-path Meadow, the men turn aside to demolish Doubting Castle, from which they deliver Mr. Despondency and his daughter, Much-afraid. So the whole 'goodly company' arrive safely at the Delectable Mountains, where

the Shepherds welcome them kindly and load them with presents. Then they went on : and just at the place where Little-faith formerly was robbed, there stood Mr. Valiant-for-Truth, with his 'right Jerusalem blade ' drawn, and his face all over with blood. Three men, Wild-head, Inconsiderate, and Pragmatic, had set on him, and had fled when 'they heard Great-heart's horse dash.' Over the Enchanted Ground, where it was so dark that they 'had to feel for one another by words,' they passed with difficulty, till they came on Mr. Standfast, escaping by prayer only just now from the enticements of Madame Bubble.

But dangers are now past, and the company has arrived at the Land of Beulah, whence they can almost see the City whither they are going. Posts come, summoning one after another. Christiana is the first. She calls her fellow pilgrims singly, and to each she says a comforting word, and so departs, and 'enters the River, with a Beck'n of Fare-well to those that followed her to the River side.' One by one the rest of the company follow, except 'the four Boys that Christiana brought with her. I did not stay where I was till they were gone over. Shall it be my lot to go that way again, I may give to those that desire it, an Account of what I am here silent about ; meantime I bid my Reader, Adieu.'

CHAPTER VI

'PILGRIM'S PROGRESS' AS LITERATURE

LEAVING till a later chapter the consideration of *Pilgrim's Progress* as a book of Religion, let us here examine it as a masterpiece of literature. Professor Sir Charles Firth has called this book 'the epic of English Puritanism.' It was not always so regarded. By superior persons Bunyan was formerly looked upon as a Dissenter who was vulgar, two crimes which banished his work into the outer darkness. Yet in the esteem of the common people, the book at once took its place alongside the Bible, on which men regarded it as an experimental commentary. Ever since Macaulay's day, educated people have joined the rank and file in praising the 'Pilgrim' as a classic. Taste had changed, and the love of elaboration and literary ornament had given place to appreciation of simple and direct thought clothed in language equally simple; just as, in our day, the furniture of our houses is plain and severe as compared with the heaviness of the Victorian style.

When the book was published, in 1678, at the price of eighteen-pence, its success was immediate. Within three years, three editions had appeared. In ten years it ran into its tenth thousand, though comparatively few people could read. This fact

throws some light on the custom of the day, by which informal 'reading circles' gathered to hear a book read by one who was better educated than the rest of the company. In the lifetime of the author ten editions had been published, and fifty years after his death, the work had been translated into Dutch, Welsh, French, German, Swedish and Polish. To-day it runs a good second to the translations of the Bible, for its appeal is not local, but universal. Christian is an Englishman and a Puritan, but before either of these he is Man. It is interesting to be told that, in the first illustrated editions sold in China, the Pilgrim wears a pigtail.

The Book has been called a classic. Professor Mackail defines the term thus, 'Without going into technicalities, but only giving a working criterion, I would say that any product of literature or art is a classic, whatever be its date or origin, to which we find ourselves continually returning, and which we continually find on returning to it even greater than we realized.'¹ Judged by this standard, the position of *Pilgrim's Progress* is secured for all time. Most of us made our first acquaintance with it in our childhood, as, like the boys who grew to be Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Baldwin, we lay on our stomachs before the nursery fire, devouring Christian's adventures and skipping his sermons. But more and more we return to it as we grow up, for we find that its mirror reflects ourselves as certainly as its pictures enthralled us when we were children.

¹ *The Pilgrim's Progress*: a Lecture delivered at the Royal Institution, March, 1924, by J. W. Mackail, p. 4.

Bunyan himself in the rhyming Preface to the Second Part, is amazed at the popularity of his book.

In France and Flanders, where men kill each other,
 My Pilgrim is esteem'd a Friend, a Brother.
 In Holland too, 'tis said, as I am told,
 My Pilgrim is with some, worth more than Gold
 Highlanders, and Wild-Irish can agree,
 My Pilgrim should familiar with them be
 'Tis in New-England under such advance,
 Receives there so much loving Countenance,
 As to be Trim'd, new-Cloth'd, and deck't with Gems,
 That it may show its Features, and its Limbs,
 Yet moie, so comely doth my Pilgrim walk,
 That thousands of him daily sing and talk.

In the beginning of the Second Part, Mr. Sagacity says, in answer to the dreamer's question as to whether he had heard of a man called Christian, 'Hear of him, ay ! I must tell you, all our country rings of him there are but few houses that have heard of him and his doings but have sought after and got the records of his pilgrimage.' The simplicity of the author's pride, and the good ground for it, are very engaging.

Great literature can be clothed only in great language. If it is to be popular, as well as great, the language must be simple. Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*¹ is great literature, but its twists and turns, its classical allusions, its long words, make it a dish only for the literary epicure. On the other hand, *Pilgrim's Progress* is written in the common speech of the people, purified by the marvellous English of the Authorized Version of the Bible. These two points must be dealt with in some detail.

¹First completed edition (the 6th) published in 1651.

Bunyan was a man of the people, and he spoke the people's speech. When he set pen to paper, this fact influenced his language, and even though the act of writing curbs a man's carelessness, we can sometimes hear this author so 'chekling' with glee that his pen outruns his literary instinct. He sees his pilgrims making 'a good shift to wagg along'; in the Valley of the Shadow, Mercy saw 'something most like a lion, and it came a great padding pace after' them; to climb Hill Difficulty throws one into 'a pelting heat.' The very talk of the gossips of a town is in Mrs. Inconsiderate's criticism of Christiana's resolve to start on pilgrimage. 'I shall never be sorry for her departure; let her go, and let better come in her room; 'twas never a good World since these whimsical fools dwelt in it.' A few specimens from the author's own marginal comments illustrate this use of every day language. The mention of Madam Wanton is marked by the note, 'She that had like to a bin too hard for Faithful in time past'; at the silver-mine, 'Christian roundeth up Demas.' When Faithful silences Talkative, who 'flings away,' saying that Faithful is a 'peevish, melancholy fellow, not fit to be discoursed with,' his creator slips in a sly note—'A good riddance'; and when Hopeful says he wonders why Little-faith did not pawn his jewels for food, 'Christian snibbeth his fellow for unadvised speaking.'¹ We remember how some of Bunyan's pious friends said about his book, 'John, print it; others said, Not so.'

¹From facsimile of First Edition, edited by Mr. Charles Whibley.

Perhaps these last did not like a word which occurs in the vigorous account of the escape from Doubting Castle. 'Then Christian went to the outward door that leads into the Castle yard, and with his key opened that also. After he went to the iron gate, for that must be opened too, but that Lock went damnable hard.'

The wisdom of the common proverb is used by Bunyan. Giant Despair has 'as many lives as a cat'; Passion believes that 'a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush'; Mr. Standfast is 'as poor as an owlet'; and,

Some of the ditch are shy, yet can
Lie tumbling in the mire.
Some, though they shun the frying-pan,
Do leap into the fire.

Even more than by the speech in which he was bred, Bunyan's writing is moulded by his study of the Bible. He knew no Greek or Latin, and read the Scripture only in English. Now the English of the Authorized Version was the language of the common folk, and in this lies one of the literary miracles of the Bible's history. The Book deals with Divine things, and by our fathers the bound volume was treated with a reverence that sometimes approached superstition. There used to be a fashion for using stilted language in preaching about it. But the Spirit of God saw to it that its writers used words that could be 'understood of the people,' as Moulton and other scholars have clearly shown. The same Spirit guided the English translators. Their medium is good Anglo-Saxon,

with short, crisp words that go to the roots of things. It surprises us when such a long word, of foreign origin, as 'congratulate' occurs in a First Lesson on a Sunday morning. But when we read the Twenty-third Psalm, we find only five words of more than two syllables, and these—'righteousness,' 'restoreth,' 'preparest,' 'anointest,' 'enemies'—are all of the commonest use. The same thing is true of the Parable of the Sower, and of hundreds of pages in the rest of the Book.

The Bible was Bunyan's English tutor, and that he learned his lesson well is shown in such an extract as the following :

'Now I saw in my dream, that by this time the Pilgrims were got over the Enchanted Ground, and entering into the country of Beulah, whose air was very sweet and pleasant, the way lying directly through it, they solaced themselves there for a season. Yea, here they heard continually the singing of birds, and saw every day the flowers appear in the earth, and heard the voice of the turtle in the land. In this country the sun shineth night and day ; wherefore this was beyond the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and also out of the reach of Giant Despair, neither could they from this place so much as see Doubting Castle. Here they were within sight of the city they were going to, also here met them some of the inhabitants thereof ; for in this land the Shining Ones commonly walked, because it was upon the borders of heaven.'

The English of this quotation is common to the whole book. It is great language, and when it

clothes great thoughts, it becomes great literature. Hence *Pilgrim's Progress* has been, and still is, a continual source of literary inspiration.

Closely connected with his use of pure and beautiful English is the control which Bunyan exercises. Many modern writers overdo their scenes. Our author himself sometimes transgresses, as in the scenes in the Interpreter's House, in the Second Part. Here we are conscious that he is forsaking his model. But compare with those scenes the following passage from Great-heart's description of Mr. Fearing, whose escort he had been. 'When he was come at Vanity Fair, I thought he would have fought with all the men at the fair. I feared there we should both have been knocked on the head, so hot was he against their fooleries. Upon the Enchanted Ground he was also very wakeful. But when he was come at the river, where was no bridge, there again he was in a heavy case. Now, now, he said, he should be drowned for ever, and so never see that face with comfort that he had come so many miles to behold.'

'And here, also, I took notice of what was very remarkable; the water of that river was lower at this time than ever I saw it in all my life. So he went over at last, not much above wet-shod.'

From the literary point of view there is a reticence and restraint about this passage which greatly strengthens its effect. We should have had no clearer idea of Fearing's character and behaviour if more had been said. Think of what is implied in the words, 'upon the Enchanted Ground he

were also very wakeful.' In the First Part, Bunyan had great work to keep his pilgrims awake. Hopeful almost audibly yawns. But Mr. Fearing, whose chief fear was that he would never arrive at the Celestial City, is 'very wakeful' where other men, less nervous, easily get tired. But that effect is conveyed in nine words.

In successive editions, Bunyan must have been tempted to make large additions. But here also his power of restraint is seen. Dr. Brown tells us that in the third edition (1679) he has added the account of Christian's 'breaking his mind' to his wife and children, the appearance of Mr. Worldly Wiseman, Christian's self-accusation before the man at the Gate, the whole incident of Diffidence, the wife of Giant Despair, and other matters.¹ But after the third edition no new matter appears. Bunyan was wise enough to let well alone.

The question has often been debated as to Bunyan's debt to sources other than the Bible. We are told by a friend of his that his prison library contained only two books, the Scriptures and *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*. From the latter he may have drawn the pictures of Faithful at Vanity Fair, though it is more likely that he is simply following a current fashion, and slipping in a little controversial matter under the guise of an account of a trial-at-law. He himself tells us that he read with delight the adventures of *Bevis of Southampton*,

¹All these instances, with the exception of Diffidence, are found in the Facsimile First Edition, whose Editor, Mr. Charles Whibley, courteously informs me that here Dr. Brown, 'a sound and wise biographer,' is for once in error.

and he may have known Quarles' *Emblems*. Such romances, or emblem-books, as Johnson's *Seven Champions of Christendom* (published in 1607) were very popular. In all these, dragons and giants, or highwaymen, appear and provide scope for adventure. But they were in the literary air of the time, and their popularity does not prove Bunyan's indebtedness.¹

We may be sure that the Civil War gave Bunyan many opportunities of studying the soldier's life. Christian is perhaps a solitary Ironside. Demas is most certainly a Royalist, so 'gentlemanlike' is he. Christiana's guide is a great Captain. He might almost be Lord Falkland. But this material is from real life, and the man who uses it is not a plagiarist.

Dr. Johnson says that Bunyan knew Spencer. It is a superficial pronouncement. But it is more likely that he was acquainted with Shakespeare, who died not long before our author's birth. There are, at least, some interesting parallels. One is with *The Tempest*.² After the shipwreck, the King of Naples, Alonso, with his brother Sebastian, Antonio the brother of Prospero the magician, and others, have been thrown up on to Prospero's enchanted island, and the invisible spirit, Ariel, makes them drowsy with 'solemn music.'

¹See Leaflet No. 10, *John Bunyan*, by Prof. C. H. Firth,
published by the English Association

²Written about 1611; first printed 1623

Antonio : We two, my lord,
Will guard your person while you take your rest,
And watch your safety.

Alonso : Thank you. Wondrous heavy. [sleeps]

Sebastian : What a strange drowsiness possesses them.

Ant. : It is the quality o' the climate

In the First Edition, after narrating the pilgrims' escape from the Flatterer, Bunyan has a side-note, 'They are come to the enchanted ground.' Here is the text :

'I saw then in my Dream, that they went till they came into a certain Countrey, whose air naturally tended to make one drowsie, if he came a stranger into it. And here Hopeful began to be very dull and heavy of sleep.'

There is another parallel between Jacque's song in *As you Like it* :—

Who doth ambition shun
And loves to live i' the sun,
Seeking the food he eats
And pleased with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither :
Here shall we see
 No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

and Mr. Valiant's song :

Who would true valour see,
 Let him come hither,
One here will constant be ;
 Come wind, come weather.
There's no discouragement
Shall make him once relent,
His first avow'd intent
 To be a pilgrim.

Who so beset him round
 With dismal stories,
Do but themselves confound,
 His strength the more is,
No lion can him fright,
He'll with a giant fight ;
But he will have a right
 To be a pilgrim.

Hobgoblin nor foul fiend
 Can daunt his spirit,
 He knows he at the end
 Shall life inherit
 Then fancies fly away
 He'll fear not what men say ;
 He'll labour night and day
 To be a pilgrim.

Though Bunyan is not a great poet, the similarity between his verse and Shakespeare's Sonnets should not be overlooked. The difference in their merit as poetry brings out more clearly their likeness in rhythm.

Here is the best-known of Shakespeare's

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
 I summon up remembrance of things past,
 I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
 And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste ;
 Then can I drown an eye, unus'd to flow,
 For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
 And weep afresh love's long-since cancell'd woe,
 And moan the expense of many a vanish'd sight ,
 But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
 All losses are restor'd, and sorrows end.

And this is the conclusion of the rhyming prologue to the Second Part of *Pilgrim's Progress*.

When thou hast told the world of all these things,
 Then turn about, my Book, and touch these strings ;
 Which, if but touchéd, will such music make,
 They'll make a cripple dance, a giant quake
 Those riddles that lie couched within thy breast,
 Freely propound, expound : and for the rest
 Of these thy mysterious lines, let them remain
 For those whose nimble fancies shall them gain.

This similarity in metre is not intended to suggest anything more than the possibility that Bunyan

borrowed forms for his own thoughts. For he was a first-hand observer of Life, and such a man can be no other than original.

Macaulay says that Bunyan was illiterate. This is true in the sense that he did not read many books. But the work he produced, under such a disadvantage, shows his genius. He was a maker of great literature for other people to read. Yet his sermon-books would long ago have perished in the ocean of oblivion, if they had not been brought ashore in the good ship 'Pilgrim' *Pilgrim's Progress* itself would have perished if it had not so strongly appealed to a common people who knew their Bible, and who recognized in Christian and his experiences a mirror of their own lives. Since Swift's day, men of education have increasingly set their seal on the popular verdict; to-day, if a man has not read the book, he is counted as having omitted an essential part of literary education. The popular verdict is in accord with a deep instinct that can recognize pure English writing. But it is still more deeply founded on the truth which is therein set forth. As long as the book is printed, people will know that it contains the story of a man, like themselves, who won through, by the grace of God, from death to Eternal Life. The manner in which the Way is described, places Bunyan in the front rank of English men of letters.

CHAPTER VII

' PILGRIM'S PROGRESS ' AS A WORK OF ART

THE function of Art is to hold up a mirror to Life in its many forms and manifestations. Thus Poetry is Art, because in it expression may be given to thoughts which are so delicate and elusive that heavy-handed prose would crush them. Architecture is Art, because it gives a form to the upward sweep of the aspirations of the human soul, or to the solidity of human hope and trust in God. Music is Art, for in it may be enshrined the mystic longing of the spirit after Divine and perfect harmony, which no words can possibly define. In all these branches of Art, a mirror is held up to Life.

Literature is Art when it fulfils the same function. It has the power of speaking to the mind and soul of a man in such a way that the reader recognizes in it the image of human nature, either as it is, or as it longs to be. Or it so describes things, that the reader may say, 'That is true,' and a certain satisfaction is brought to the mind thereby. The truth may be either beautiful and alluring, as in some great description of Nature, or of a life of heroism; or it may be ugly and terrifying, as in some denunciation of sin. But the essence of the Art is that it must be true and just.

In this sense *Pilgrim's Progress* is a work of Art. Every character in it has some very definite trait of human nature. All its people live and breathe, and we have known and can recognize many of them. But we see the truth of the character-sketch most clearly when the man concerned is placed in ordinary conditions. Christian is sometimes very human and recognizable, as for instance, when he comes to By-path Meadow, where he shows the traveller's love of a short cut and an easy path :

'Now the way from the river was rough, and their feet tender, by reason of their travels, so the souls of the pilgrims were much discouraged because of the way. Wherefore, still as they went on, they wished for a better way. Now, a little before them, there was on the left hand of the road a meadow, and a stile to go over into it; and that meadow is called By-path Meadow. Then said Christian to his fellow, If this meadow lieth along by our way-side, let us go over into it. Then he went to the stile to see, and behold, a path lay along by the way, on the other side of the fence. It is according to my wish, said Christian. Here is the easiest going; come, good Hopeful, and let us go over.'

'HOPE. But how if this path should lead us out of the way ?'

'CHR. That is not like, said the other. Look, doth it not go along by the wayside ? So Hopeful, being persuaded by his fellow, went after him over the stile.'

On the other hand, Christian is sometimes

shadowy, a creature of the imagination. In the fight with Apollyon, we are excited by the uncertainty of the issue of the conflict, but a distinct effort is necessary on our part before we can spiritualize the scene. Something has been introduced which is not in common experience. Both in *Grace Abounding* and here, Bunyan thinks of temptation under a bodily shape, as did Luther when he flung the ink-pot at the Devil¹. But most of us are not so made. On the other hand, we have all tried By-path Meadow. The very name holds up the mirror to us. But the mirror requires dusting before we recognize ourselves in the Valley of Humiliation, with Apollyon straddling over the path. The scene is a great one, and no one, especially if he is young, would vote for its alteration. Nevertheless, it is not such true art as is the picture of the By-path to Doubting Castle.

Canon Streeter, in *Reality*, tells us one of the differences between Science and Art. The business of Science, he says, is to demonstrate; that of Art is to suggest. Science, when its investigations are complete, leaves one no alternative. Two and two must be four. But Art challenges one to make up one's mind. Hence our Lord used Parables without public explanation, in order to make men think for themselves, and so find His meaning. It was a common method of His to teach by suggestion.

Bunyan abounds in suggestiveness, and in this

¹Cf. Prof. C H Firth, op. cit. 'Bunyan's natural instinct was to express each change of feeling, each vicissitude in his spiritual conflict, in figurative or metaphorical form.'

It has all the power of a great artist. At his best, he does not overdo things by loading the story with unnecessary details. Ruskin, in *Modern Painters*, says that, in the painting of a picture, there is a point after which every additional stroke weakens the total effect. So it is in literary description. An illustration will show how by a few words Bunyan attains his purpose. In the Second Part the company passes the place, near the Cross, wh. & they find Simple, Sloth, and Presumption hung on gibbets for turning pilgrims out of the Way. Mercy asks Great-heart if they succeeded in persuading any to be of their opinion. He replies : ' Yes : they turned several out of the way. There was Slow-pace that they persuaded to do as they. They also prevailed with one Short-wind, with one No-heart, with one Linger-after-lust, and with one Sleepy-head, and with a young woman her name was Dull, to turn out of the way, and become as they.'

Mark Rutheford complains that Bunyan tells us no more about the young woman. But is any further information either necessary or possible ? The facts are all in seven words. Unthinking, she had begun as a pilgrim, and had come thus far. But she had fallen in with bad company—how bad, their names will show. She had turned out of the way, and this was her fate. Later editors have corrected Bunyan, and inserted a comma in the sentence. But as he wrote it, it reads, 'A young woman her name was Dull.' It is the last word about Miss Dull, and even an added comma spoils it.

Bunyan knows how to make his portraits speak.

In the Interpreter's House, the first thing shown to Christian was 'the picture of a very grave person, and this was the fashion of it : it had eyes lifted up to heaven, the best of books in its hand, the law of truth was written upon its lips, the world was behind its back ; it stood as if it pleaded with men, and a crown of gold did hang over its head.' Every word of these phrases was carefully weighed and chosen. The result is an impression of a very Christ-like preacher ; so like to the Master is the servant that, but for that touch about the crown (not yet given), one might think that Bunyan meant it for the portrait of Christ Himself. In the Second Part, Christiana sees the same picture, which is there said to be that 'of the biggest of them all.' This at least contradicts the thought that it is a self-portrait of the author. Here the mirror is fulfilling the highest function of Art : it shows the soul what it most longs to be. Though Bunyan was not thinking of himself, these noble words stand on the pedestal of his statue in his native town.

In the course of the story of Christian and his successors, we have glimpses of contemporary England. After Giant Despair had been slain, the pilgrims make great merriment :

'Now when Feeble-mind and Ready-to-halt saw that it was the head of Giant Despair indeed, they were very jocund and merry. Now Christiana, if need was, could play upon the viol, and her daughter Mercy upon the lute ; so, since they were so merry disposed, she played them a lesson, and Ready-to-halt would dance. So he took Des-

pcndency's daughter, named Much-afraid, by the hand, and to dancing they went in the road. True, he could not dance without one crutch in his hand ; but, I promise you, he footed it well. Also the girl was to be commended, for she answered the music handsomely.'

Mr. Mackail surmises that the 'lesson' played by Christiana was by Blow, who was born in 1648, and was appointed organist of Westminster Abbey in 1669; or perhaps by Purcell (1658-1695), whose anthem, 'Out of the Depths,' Wesley heard in St. Paul's in the afternoon of the day of his conversion, May 24, 1739. Of the whole scene Mackail remarks that 'it is a pretty picture of Puritan England, and perhaps not a misleading one.'¹

The Stuart Period is of interest to the student of the religious history of our country, for in it comes the climax of a phase of the struggle between Protestant and Catholic. Dr. Brown says that Bunyan's only reference to Rome is the cartoon of Giant Pope, now 'grown so crazy and stiff in his joints, that he can do little more than sit in his cave's mouth, grinning at pilgrims as they go by, and biting his nails because he cannot come at them.' But Dr. Brown has overlooked at least two other references. In Vanity Fair, 'as in other fairs, some one commodity is the chief of all the fair, so the ware of Rome and her merchandise is greatly

¹Mackail, op. cit., p. 42. For Purcell see *Wesley's Journal* (Standard Edition) iii, 356. It is worth while to call attention to the very descriptive rhythm of one phrase in the above extract—The metre suggests a waltz.

' and to | dancing they | went in the | road.' /

promoted in' this fair ; only our English nation, with some others, have taken a dislike thereat.' In the Second Part, again at Vanity Fair, Rome is ' a monster out of the woods,' whose ' body was like a dragon, and it had seven heads and ten horns. It made great havoc of children, and yet it was governed by a woman. It propounded conditions to men, which such as loved their lives more than their souls accepted.'¹

The Puritans had reason to fear Rome. Charles II secretly, and James II openly, tried to fasten her yoke on the neck of the English people. But, as already seen, England had made up her mind, and the Puritans expressed it. They set their faces against all priestly pretensions. They held to the soul's right of direct approach to God through Christ alone. All ceremonies, whether in the Roman or English Churches, which tended to put a priest in the way, were abominations to them. On the other hand, they protested with equal vigour against the luxury and levity of the time, which, they held, was derogatory to the Majesty of God and the dignity of the human soul.

Thus we find the best of the Puritans were grave and sober men. That they were unpopular is shown by Bishop Burnet's almost scurrilous description of them in his *History of My Own Times*.² But they were in earnest, and common tradition puts down to them the disfigurement of saints'

¹Bunyan was familiar with such Fairs as Elstow, and, notably, Sturbridge (Cambridge).

²Edition published by Wm Smith, London, 1838, p 9. Butler's *Hudibras* is another instance of Puritan unpopularity.

images in our Churches, and the sobriety of the English Sunday. It is therefore often supposed that Puritanism and light-heartedness could not go together, and that Puritanism and Art are mutually exclusive ideas.

Whatever may be the degree of truth in this oft-quoted criticism, it is not the whole truth. Milton was a great Puritan, and in *Paradise Lost* he shows how stern the Puritan creed can be. But he also wrote *Comus* (1634). He uses the form of drama to sing the praise of

The sun-clad power of chastity,
and in it he strikes the dominant note of Puritan teaching,

Thou cans't not touch the freedom of the mind.

There is nothing in English more beautiful than this 'Masque.' It is the protest of the best that was in Puritanism against inartistic narrowness on the one side, and against the 'brewed enchantments' of an immoral age on the other.¹

The wisely-used freedom of the spirit, for which Milton pleaded, is one of the themes of *Pilgrim's Progress*. Bunyan uses all his art to exalt it. He is himself an example of it. With great delight he sets about writing a story. But he keeps his delight under control. Not for a moment does he lose sight of his main purpose, which is to induce men to flee from the wrath to come. For his purpose he, like St. Paul, 'uses guile,' but the purpose and the story remain throughout one and

¹ *Puritanism and Art*, by Joseph Crouch, Chapter vii.

indivisible. He makes the adventure of Christ-like living a lovely and desirable thing, and in so doing gives the lie to the theory that Puritan restraint destroys artistic beauty.

Dr. Johnson once told Boswell that he knew only three books which a man might read and wish that they had been longer. They were *Don Quixote* (first part 1605, second part 1614; the latter was written because literary 'pirates' were publishing spurious completions); *Pilgrim's Progress*, and *Robinson Crusoe* (both parts in 1719). The books are strangely similar in history and in purpose. Each of the authors was in his sixth decade when he wrote. Each of the books is a record, under story-form, of a spiritual experience. *Don Quixote* and *Robinson Crusoe* are novels. So is *Pilgrim's Progress*. For a novel is real life in fancy dress; and Bunyan, surprised though he would be at the tribute, is the father of English novelists.

A great novel, as a work of art, must have at least three qualities—it must be alive, and in it there must be unity and movement. The 'Pilgrim' has all these, and adds that which lifts it to a place among the classics of Religion. Of the life that is in the story there is no further need to speak.¹ But how strong is the sense of movement and of unity may be appreciated by passing from the First Part straight into the Second. As one does so, one realizes that he has come out of a rushing, hurly-

¹Mr. Gandhi took *Pilgrim's Progress* as a text book (in 1925) with his students at Sabarmati. Scenes from it are frequently acted by people undergoing treatment in the Leper Settlement at Purulia, Behar.

burly struggle, in which a man, constantly at the point of drowning, nevertheless thrusts his way to the shore. Here, with Christiana, one is 'gently led.' Dangers there are on the journey, but there is time for sight-seeing and for hospitable entertainment. The sense of movement, hurried or leisured, is never absent.

The whole story is also a unity. The man who at the first is seen 'looking this way and that way' to escape from his burden and his danger, is the same man who is met by Shining Ones on the other side of the River which has no bridge. In the Second Part, new features of the road are added, such as the houses of Gaius and Mnason; the pace has slowed down, for though Christian is constantly 'running,' no one 'runs' who is under Great-heart's charge; and there is more time for merriment and feasting. But 'the Way is the Way' in both parts. Moreover, Bunyan uses a little device to make sure of the unity of his tale. He not only assumes that his reader remembers Christian, but he also makes his later characters remember him. Valiant-for-Truth tells Great-heart and his company how he had heard of Christian's adventures, and names them in order, ending by saying that these dangers had been cited by those who would persuade himself to stay at home. Indeed, such people had reinforced their arguments by adding that 'after all his ventures for a celestial crown, Christian was certainly drowned in the Black River, and never went a foot further, however it was smothered up.'

The art of Bunyan is shown, not only in these

qualities of good story-writing, but in his sense of humour, which as Streeter points out, has its uses in suggesting clues to truth. For the present the picture of By-ends and his companions may suffice to illustrate this point. By-ends tells Christian that he comes from the town of Fair-speech, a wealthy place, where he has many rich relations, though his great-grandfather was but a water-man, rowing one way and looking another. Presently, he and Christian part, and By-ends is joined by three friends, Mr. Hold-the-World, Mr. Money-love and Mr. Save-all, who in their youth 'were taught by a schoolmaster in Love-gain, which is a market town in the county of Coveting, in the north.' These four enter into a discussion as to whether it is justifiable for a minister (Bunyan was thinking of those who turned their coats in 1660) or a tradesman to use religion as a means of gain. Money-love speaks :

' And now to the second part of the question which concerns the tradesman you mentioned. Suppose such an one to have but a poor employ in the world, but by becoming religious, he may mend his market, perhaps get a rich wife, or more, and far better customers to his shop ; for my part, I see no reason but that this may be lawfully done. For why :

' 1. To become religious is a virtue, by what meanssoever a man becomes so.

' 2. Nor is it unlawful to get a rich wife, or more custom to my shop.

' 3. Besides, the man that gets these by becoming religious, gets that which is good, of them that are

good, by becoming good himself ; so then here is a good wife, and good customers, and good gain, and all these by becoming religious, which is good ; therefore, to become religious to get all these, is a good and profitable design.

'This answer, thus made by this Mr. Money-love to Mr. By-ends' question, was highly applauded by them all ; wherefore they concluded, upon the whole, that it was most wholesome and advantageous.'¹

Something will be said in a later chapter about our author's love of beauty. But in closing, we must note his great interest in his own work, a sure mark of the artist. Here is the beginning of his book :

'As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place, where was a den ; and I laid me down in that place to sleep ; and as I slept, I dreamed a dream. I dreamed, and, behold, I saw a man clothed with rags, standing in a certain place, with his face from his own house, a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back. I looked, and saw him open the book, and read therein ; and as he read, he wept and trembled ; and not being able longer to contain, he brake out with a lamentable cry, saying, "What shall I do ? "'²

Almost in the next paragraph the miserable man begins to run, crying 'Life, Life, Eternal Life !' and Bunyan runs with him, carrying the reader breathless in his train.

Pilgrim's Progress is one of the points where Puritanism and Art join hands in the service of the Truth.

¹This conversation was added by Bunyan in his second or third edition.

²Compare with this the opening of *Treasure Island* ; Stevenson was a great lover of Bunyan.

CHAPTER VIII

BUNYAN'S RELIGION

IN the seventeenth century nothing was known of Science in the modern usage of the term. There was no theory of Evolution, and no materialist philosophy to tempt any one to try to account for a world without God. The reading of the Bible, undisturbed by critical research, had given a new stimulus to thought, and this was aided by the quickening of the imagination which had taken place in the latter part of the century preceding. The Puritans were the real thinkers of the time. They believed passionately that God is a Spirit, and that there was the possibility of direct approach to Him through Christ. In the ferment of new ideas Bunyan shared.

In a limited sense he was a Calvinist. He held without question the doctrine of the Sovereignty of God, and went so far as to affirm that all happenings were foreknown, and to that extent predestined. But this did not prevent his preaching the Free Grace which offered salvation to all who would accept. His great concern was not logical consistency, but the answer to the cry—‘What must I do to be saved?’ His Calvinism was more ecclesiastical than theological. Calvin believed in

the State as governed by God, and that His saints should judge the world. Bunyan and the Puritans would have the Church freed from the contamination of State influence. The great matter was the making of saints. Hence 'the power of the Puritan writers,' says Trevelyan, 'lay elsewhere than in theology. *Pilgrim's Progress* and George Fox's *Journal* tell of the immediate experience of the soul.'

Yet, with a thirst for knowledge such as there is in the mind of man, he must have some theory of the world. Bunyan is not without his theory, and it centres round that one idea of Salvation. To him there was a very clear-cut difference between right and wrong. If the easy way through By-path Meadow runs alongside the Highway, it is 'on the other side of the fence.' There is no such thing as the 'non-moral.' There is only one thing wrong with the world, and that is Sin. The author of sin is the Devil. The punisher of sin is God. Justice has been defrauded, and must be satisfied. The satisfier of Justice is God's Son, on whom the whole penalty falls, and by whom the whole debt is paid. The world will only recover from its sinsickness when it accepts the remedy from the hands of Christ, who has in His own Person carried its disease.

Our outlook on such subjects as God, the world, and human nature, differs from Bunyan's. But if we are to understand him, we must try to understand his religious teaching. For he may be a great man of letters, he may be a great artist: but literature and art were to him as nothing, compared with

the necessity laid on him to preach the Gospel. His literary work, and his creative art were only vehicles by which he sought to convey spiritual truth. We do him grave injustice if we stop short of his religion. The consuming passion of his life was to persuade men to come to God. The form of his message differed from that of our message, only because the conditions of his age were so different from the conditions of our own.

Bunyan's religion is rooted in the righteousness and the reality of God. However remote God may be from the material of the world, He is nigh unto all them that call upon Him. The age of miracles may be passed, but prayer still brings His help. Mercy tells a pleasant dream to Christiana, who replies : ' You must give me leave to tell you that I believe it was a good dream. God speaketh... in a dream, in a vision of the night. We need not, when a-bed, lie awake to talk with God. He can visit us while we sleep, and cause us then to hear His voice. Our heart oft-times wakes when we sleep ; and God can speak to that, either by words, by proverbs, by signs and similitudes, as well as if one was awake.' Preservation from danger is thought to be a mercy. ' It chanced once,' says Bunyan in *Grace Abounding*, ' that an adder passed over the highway ; so, I, having a stick, struck her over the back : and having stunned her, I plucked out her sting with my fingers : by which act, had not God been merciful to me, I might, by my desperateness, have brought myself to my end.'

Bunyan would not have understood the doctrine

of the Immanence of God. He is above the world, and stoops to it, but cannot be thought of as at its heart. A Puritan would have been slow to agree that there could be a soul of goodness in things evil. He would have said that white is white, and black is black: in morality there can be no grey. It was only 'one Fool and one Want-wit' who would try to wash 'an Ethiopian, with an intention to make him white: but the more they washed him the blacker he was.' There was a difference, which was terrifying, between right and wrong, and the wrong could only be made right by a Plan of Salvation, devised and carried out by God who stood outside the conflict, but ready to help when His conditions were complied with.

What happened to a rebel against God's design is seen in *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman*, a book which Bunyan seems to have written as representing the other side of the picture which is in the 'Pilgrim.' It was published in 1680, and may have been modelled on Dent's *Plain Man's Pathway*, which, as we have seen, was part of the first Mrs. Bunyan's inheritance from her godly father. Badman, when a child, is apprenticed, and robs his good master. He treats his next master, a bad one, in the same way. He sets up in business, cheats his customers, and gambles away his money. Then he marries a godly wife who is rich. He deceives her, and becomes bankrupt. But he deceives his creditors also, and is better off for 'breaking.' Good people quote scripture to him, and he mocks them. Then accident and illness befall him, and

he shams penitence. His cruelty breaks his wife's spirit and she dies. Presently, he comes to his end 'worthless and impenitent.' But Bunyan does not make him die otherwise than in peace—'a staggering dispensation.' He was probably writing of some person or persons known to him, and he keeps close to well-observed fact. But he makes Badman's punishment as clear as day. In Froude's words, 'Bunyan has made him a brute, because such men do become brutes.' His penalty here was that God 'gave him over to work uncleanness with greediness.' God stood away from him, because he would have nothing to do with God.¹

In the story of Christian and of 'Mr. Badman' Bunyan was writing of the experience of an individual in his relation to God. But more remained to be said. He evidently felt that his theme of sin and salvation needed to be treated on a larger scale. 'God so loved the world,' said the Scriptures, and the preacher did not hesitate to proclaim salvation to all who would accept it. He seems to feel, especially in the Second Part of the 'Progress,' that he must show more clearly the universality of the Grace of God. So here is no longer the picture of one or two pilgrims, but of a whole company. They came from different places. Christiana starts from the City of Destruction; Valiant-for-Truth hails from Dark-land, a town 'on the same coast as Destruction; ' Despondency is rescued, 'half-starved,' from Doubting Castle, and

¹Browning's poem, 'Ned Bratts,' is founded on an incident in this story

is set upon the Way ; Fearing and Honest both come from Stupidity, a town which 'lies four degrees beyond the City of Destruction' ; while Feeble-mind was born in the town of Uncertain. Since Bunyan sets this varied company on pilgrimage, and sees them all safely to their journey's end, it cannot be said that there was any lack of breadth in his Gospel call. 'Come and welcome to Jesus Christ' was his message to all who would hear, no matter in what state of need they might come.

It was not only in the Second Part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* that Bunyan bethought himself of the need of larger treatment of his theme. He published the *Holy War* in 1682, four years after the First Part of the 'Progress,' and two years before the Second. Its full title is 'The Holy War made by Shaddai (i.e. the Almighty) upon Diabolus for the Regaining the Metropolis of the World, or the losing and taking again of the Town of Mansoul.' The title shows that Bunyan has something universal before him, such as Milton had in his *Paradise Lost*. He tried to set forth the Plan of Salvation as it was in the mind of God, and not simply as it worked out in the saving of an individual. He draws on Scripture, of course ; but he draws also on contemporary happenings, and on his own spiritual experience. It is a great book, written in cooler blood than was Christian's story ; but, perhaps for that very reason, it has not the grip on our affections that Christian holds.

'In my travels,' the story begins, 'as I walked

through many regions and countries, it was my chance to arrive at that famous continent of Universe. The part where I was was very fruitful, also well peopled, and a very sweet air.' (Is this a peep at Bunyan's love of England?) This continent has people of all complexions, languages and ways of religion. In it is a fair and beautiful town called Mansoul, 'built by one Shaddai for his own delight.' The town 'had commission and power from her King to demand service from all, and also to subdue those that anyways denied it.' Mansoul, therefore is Bunyan's picture of Humanity, and the losing and recovery of Mansoul is the story of the Fall and Redemption of mankind.

Now Mansoul, with its five impregnable gates, and its united and loyal population, has one enemy, Diabolus. He is the chief of a company who had once been servants of Shaddai, but had rebelled and had been banished. 'Roving and ranging in much fury,' they come across the King's Mansoul, and hold a council of war as to how they may make it their own. The evil hosts assemble before Ear-gate, hold out lying promises, and one Ill-pause induces the town to relax its watchfulness. Captain Resistance is shot down, my Lord Innocency dies of grief, and the town opens Ear-gate and Eye-gate to the Diabolonians. The Lord Mayor, Mr. Understanding, is shut up in his house, with a wall built to darken it; Lord Will-be-will, who 'had some privileges peculiar to himself in the town,' becomes the agent of Diabolus; while the Recorder (or Conscience) is belittled in the citizens'

eyes as being mad, because 'when his fits were upon him, he would make the whole town of Mansoul shake with his voice which was like the rattling of thunder.' The Corporation was remodelled. Here Bunyan works up the actual remodelling of Bedford Corporation which took place while he was writing the story.

Just as he has shown us the Council held by Diabolus in the 'horrible pits,' so now he depicts the deliberations in the Court of Heaven. 'The Son of Shaddai, a sweet and comely Person, and one that had always great affection for those that are in affliction, having stricken (i.e. shaken) hands with his Father, promised that he would be His servant to recover Mansoul again.' The first step is to send Captain Boanerges and his companions to summon the town to surrender, and their thunderous assaults cause great heart-searching among the inhabitants, and much fear to Diabolus. But because Prejudice, with a gang of deaf men, holds Ear-gate, the attack fails, and the Captains 'retire to winter quarters.' This is evidently Bunyan's picture of the Old Testament dispensation.

Then Emmanuel himself takes the field and invests the town. Diabolus meets him at Mouth-gate, and there ensues an argument, after which Emmanuel attacks and carries the defences. The people petition for their lives, a free pardon is granted, Diabolus is chained up, and there is great joy in the city.

But one, Carnal-Security, still lurks in the place, and he carries on such intrigues that, for a time,

Emmanuel privately withdraws. (The allegory halts here, for how could Bunyan represent the Cross under such a figure?) There follows a revolution in Mansoul, and with a great army of Doubters, Diabolus breaks in through Feel-gate. He lays plots to ruin the place by means of Riches and Prosperity. The distressed inhabitants appeal to Emmanuel to return. He comes, with Captain Credence as lord-lieutenant of his forces, and in a tremendous fight defeats the Doubters, leaving not one alive. Men were told off to bury these foes deep, 'so that the name and remembrance of a Diabolonian Doubter might be blotted out from under heaven.' Thus, after the failure of one more attack—this time by Blood-men, or persecutors,—peace is brought back to Mansoul, and promise made that she shall be rebuilt in Emmanuel's own country 'in such strength and glory as she never did see in the Kingdom where she is now placed.'

As far as Bunyan had a 'system' of Theology, it is in accord with the Calvinistic trend of his day. Under the form of an allegory he sets it forth in the *Holy War*. More directly he preaches it in his sermons, of which *The Jerusalem Sinner Saved* is one of the best. In all his preaching he emphasizes two subjects—The Law, and the Gospel. As for the Law, his words are terrific in their impact on conscience. He not only cries out against the sinfulness of sin, but he drags men's sins, in detail, out into the light. Hell fire is to him a grim reality, and those who stand in greatest danger of it are those 'barren professors' who use religion

as a screen for evil thinking and doing. ‘He did strike something of awe into them that had nothing of the fear of God.’

He is equally definite in his preaching of the Gospel. There are two Covenants, the one through the Law, which can only end in including all under sin. For the Law requires perfection, and has no mercy, therefore ‘thy deliverance comes another way,’ that is, through the covenant for which Christ is ‘bound surety.’ ‘For God and Christ were in good earnest about the salvation of sinners : for as soon as ever the covenant was made, the next thing was, who should be bound to see all those things fulfilled which were conditioned on between the Father and the Son ; the angels, they could have no hand in it ; the world could not do it ; the devils had rather seen them damned than they would wish them the least good ; thus Christ looked and there was none to help. So that He must be not only He with whom the covenant was made, but He must stand bound to see that all and every particular thing conditioned for should be, both in manner, and matter, at the time and place, according to the agreement, duly and orderly fulfilled. Is not this grace ? ’ ‘Without shedding of blood there is no remission ; and besides, there was no death that could satisfy God’s justice but His.’ ‘And this sometimes hath been life to me. And so, whatever thou, O my soul, findest wanting in thyself, through faith thou shalt see all laid up for thee in Jesus Christ, whether it be wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, or redemption. Nay,

not only so, He is all these things in His own person, without thee, in the presence of His Father, for thee.'

These extracts, from the *Doctrine of Law and Grace Unfolded*, show how clear cut and definite was the Puritan position. Equally assured was their appeal. In 1698, ten years after Bunyan's death, was published that 'very noble treatise,' the *Heavenly Footman*. 'The advertisement to the Reader' shows that *Pilgrim's Progress* was in Bunyan's mind as he wrote. His text is 'So run, that ye may obtain.' He gives nine directions how to run to the Kingdom, of which these are some. 'Get into the way.' 'Strip, and lay aside everything that would hinder.' 'Run as the fugitive ran to the City of Refuge.' 'Take heed of stumbling at the Cross.' 'God give thee a prosperous journey.' Then he finishes his 'seventh motive' (what sermons these were!) with this winsome appeal: 'To encourage thee a little farther, set to the work, and when thou hast run thyself down weary, then the Lord Jesus will take thee up and carry thee. Is not this enough to make any poor soul begin his race? Thou perhaps criest, "O, but I am feeble, I am lame, &c." But He will gather His lambs with His arm, and carry them in his bosom. When they are weary, they shall ride.'¹

The Puritans had all the strength which comes from facing facts, and calling them by their right names. They based themselves firmly on the righteousness of God, and whatever was contrary to that was sin. They did not succeed in explaining

¹Bunyan's *Works*, Offer's Edition. Vol. iii. p. 391.

how the Death of Christ is the atonement for man's sin, but experience taught them that burdens were lost at the Cross, and that new life came to men out of the empty tomb. Faith that is verified by experience must always be prepared to go on where logic halts, and it was such 'full assurance' of faith that enabled the Puritans to leave their priceless legacy to our more troubled, more questioning age.

CHAPTER IX

SAINTS AND SINNERS

BUNYAN believed that Religion, which is the fear of God, must make a difference in a man's way of living. If he has no godly fear, he has no religion at all. Whether a man has true or false religion, depends on his true or false thought of God. But whatever its character, religion is active, for good or evil. To find Bunyan's theory of the religious life—his doctrine—one must search through his sermons; but his view of the way in which men live out their thoughts about God is best understood by reading *Pilgrim's Progress*.

The City of Destruction is Bunyan's picture of the state of original guilt, into which, as he believed, all men are born. Most of the folk in the City have no thought of God at all. They are 'an idle sort of people,' who spend their time in gossip. Mrs. Timorous, 'having little to do this morning,' tried to dissuade Christiana from going on pilgrimage, as her father 'would have had Christian go back, when he met him on Hill Difficulty, for fear of the lions.' Failing in her effort, she went home and sent for her neighbours, 'to wit, Mrs. Bat's-eyes, Mrs. Inconsiderate, Mrs. Light-mind and Mrs. Know-nothing.'

These ladies, having exhausted the topic of Christiana's folly, turned with gusto to discuss Madame Wanton's party, held on the previous day, where 'we were as merry as the maids.' It is a perfect picture of Destruction City. There is no thought of God in its heart, though Pliable is a possible exception. Something new, something alluring, like the thought of the riches and glory of the Heavenly City, will almost persuade him to accompany Christian, but the Slough of Despond soon cured that folly, for which, on his return home, he was 'had greatly in derision : some did mock and despise him, and scarce any would set him on work.'

If one would get away from the fate that hangs over the City, he must leave it, and that meant going on pilgrimage. It has been seen already how naturally Bunyan, the born wanderer, turned to this figure for his parable of the active life of religion. The burden on Christian's back, like the 'great burden on my spirit' of which Bunyan speaks in *Grace Abounding*, was intolerable. The poor penitent hears of a place where he may be rid of his load, and, leaving all, he starts out. But he does not crawl, he runs, with his fingers in his ears. The beginning of religion is in desperate earnest, for the Kingdom of Heaven is open only to those who try to force their way in.¹

Bunyan paid a great price for peace of conscience. At first sight, such a statement seems to contradict his, and the New Testament's, doctrine of Free

¹D. S. Sharp, *Epicetus and the New Testament*, p. 67.

Grace. But there is such a thing as proving oneself worthy of, and capable of receiving, a gift. So Christian must get out of the clutches of Mr. Worldly-Wiseman, who 'looked like a gentleman,' before he can reach Good-will, the porter at the Wicket-gate, and by him be 'pulled inside,' out of the reach of the arrows shot from Beelzebub's castle. The way to the Cross is beset by regrets, and doubts, and fears, and false hopes, all of which must be manfully withstood. Yet the grace of starting is a crowning mercy. For the Road does not begin at the Cross: it begins, as we saw, at Destruction, or at Darkland, or at Stupidity, or at any other place from which a man will set his face toward God. It runs through the Slough of Despond, over which 'there are good and substantial steps, if men do but see them,' and though 'fear follows hard,' the 'ground is good when once they are got in at the gate.' The man whose feet are on the road has an aim in life. Unlike the people he has left behind, he knows what he is about. Religion has the assurance of faith.

It is precisely this sense of assurance which accounts for the air of good cheer that pervades this book of Bunyan's. He seems to remember that he 'gave three leaps for joy, and went on singing,' when he himself first saw the Cross. He could not help drawing a cheerful picture of the Road. In the Second Part, when Christiana and her company entered the Interpreter's House, 'they were bidden sit down and rest them; the which when they had done, those that attended upon the

Pilgrims in the house, came into the room to see them. And one smiled, and another smiled, and they all smiled, for joy that Christiana was become a pilgrim.' It is true that some of the travellers are less cheerful than others. Mr. Fearing 'had a Slough of Despond in his mind, a slough that he carried everywhere with him ; it would have pitied one's heart to have seen him shaking and shrinking' Mr. Feeble-mind, Fearing's nephew, confesses that he is 'a man of no strength at all,' to whom other pilgrims were kind, 'though none were willing to go as softly as I am forced to do' But then, Fearing was born in the town of Stupidity, and Feeble-mind in Uncertain, and Bunyan intends the very names of men and places to be a foil to the gladness of faith which he holds to be one of the privileges of religion.

The Pilgrims are often asked if they are not on a wild-goose chase. Mr. Atheist bears a name that is not now fashionable, but he is not dead yet. He asks Christian and Hopeful whither they were going :

CHR. We are going to the Mount Zion.

Then Atheist fell into a very great laughter.

CHR. What is the meaning of your laughter ?

ATHEIST. I laugh to see what ignorant persons you are, to take upon you so tedious a journey, and yet are like to have nothing but your travel for your pains.

CHR. Why, man, do you think we shall not be received ?

ATHEIST. Received ! There is no such place as you dream of in all this world.

CHR. But there is in the world to come.

ATHEIST. When I was at home in mine own country, I heard as you now affirm, and from that hearing went out to see, and have been seeking this city this twenty years ; but find no more of it than I did the first day I set out.

This incident happens toward the end of the First Part, but the temptation indicated is present throughout. Christian, on Forgetful-Green, had to fight for his life against Apollyon, who reminds him of the mistakes and sins into which he had fallen even since he started out, and argues that he has done the unpardonable thing, so that his Prince will never forgive him. When Christian affirms the mercy of Christ, the mask falls from his enemy's face : 'I am an enemy to this Prince : I hate his person, laws, and people. I am come out on purpose to withstand thee.'

Christian's answer gives the clue to the ground of Bunyan's faith. 'Apollyon, beware what you do, for I am in the King's Highway, the way of holiness.' Not only has the Pilgrim the conviction that he is on the Road whose builder and maker is God, but he has the visible marks of a changed life upon him. Bunyan's basis for true religion is in inward witness and outward fruits. All his writings testify to his awe-ful and grateful reverence for Christ, and it is His proved mercy which is the foundation of faith. It comes out again and again in *Pilgrim's Progress*. Once more reference may be made to the argument with Apollyon. Christian speaks : 'What I promised thee was in my nonage ;

and, besides, I count the Prince under whose banner now I stand is able to absolve me ; yea, and to pardon also what I did as to my compliance with thee ; and besides, O thou destroying Apollyon ! to speak truth, I like his service, his wages, his servants, his government, his company, and country, better than thine ; and, therefore, leave off to persuade me further ; I am his servant, and I will follow him.'

The same truth is put in another way in Great-heart's account of that 'troublesome pilgrim,' Mr. Fearing. 'At last he came in (to the Interpreter's House), and I will say that for my Lord, he carried it wonderfully lovingly to him. There were but a few good bits at the table, but some of it was laid upon his trencher. Then he presented the note, and my Lord looked thereon, and said his desire should be granted. So, when he had been there a good while, he seemed to get some heart, and to be a little more comfortable ; for my master, you must know, is one of very tender bowels, especially to them that are afraid ; wherefore he carried it so towards him, as might tend most to his encouragement.' Bunyan holds that the good ground of faith is the revelation of the kindness and mercy of God in Jesus Christ.. There is no wonder that to him religion is a happy life.

The complaint has been made that *Pilgrim's Progress* is a selfish book. Christian, it is said, thinks of nothing but saving his own soul. But Bunyan's aim and his personal characteristics must be taken into account. He wrote in prison. His

very active life of evangelism had been rudely interrupted, and, for all he knew, death or banishment might be awaiting him. Did he himself know nothing of Doubting Castle, or of Mr. Atheist? He must have been lonely enough at times in the prison on the bridge-head, with so much busy life passing on the other side of the wall. So for the encouragement of his own spirit he sat down and wrote, and, as he wrote, forgot his cares in the glorious adventures of his hero, and the magnificent mercy of his Lord. Religion does not forbid a man to take thought for his own soul.

There is another reply to the criticism about the self-centred nature of the 'Pilgrim.' Bunyan seems to have felt its point, for in the *House Beautiful*, Christian is asked what he has done with his wife and family. One would think that, as he penned the question, he made up his mind that some day he would start Christiana on the road after her husband. Years after, in the *Heavenly Footman*, at the close of the sermon, he quoted Lot's wife as 'an example for all lazy runners.' 'She looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt; yet you see that this would not cause Lot to look behind him to see her. I have sometimes wondered at Lot in this particular.' When Bunyan wrote the Second Part, it is to be noted that Christiana confesses that it was her husband's influence that induced her to take the Road. Christian's words could not persuade her, and he had to leave her behind. But he also left behind him the power of a good example.

Moreover, his example touched others. In Vanity Fair he and Faithful bore a good witness, and when Christian went on alone, Hopeful ran after and joined him. When Christiana arrived, she found quite a number of men and women, such as Mr. Contrite and Miss Grace, who, though 'not so numerous as those on the other side,' were daily making a good confession of faith, insomuch that 'Religion is now counted honourable' in the Fair. There are more ways than one of spreading the Gospel, and the author hints that these people were the fruits of the brave example of Christian and his friend. It is an essential part of Religion to let the light shine.¹

One of the charms of *Pilgrim's Progress* is that it compels the reader to be on the alert if he is to catch its allusions and its lessons. One subtle touch in the account of the imprisonment in Doubting Castle must suffice for illustration. We find in his other writings that Bunyan insisted on the observance of the means of grace, and especially on the use of Sunday and of Bible-reading and prayer, as part of religious life and duty. He introduces these points in the 'Pilgrim.' 'In the dungeon they lay from Wednesday morning till Saturday night, without one bit of bread or drop of drink, or light, or any to ask how they did.' (At this point, in the second and all subsequent editions, Bunyan inserts the long account of Diffidence, Giant Despair's

¹It should be noticed that, when she came to the Cross, Christiana 'wished with all her heart that here was Madam Wanton too. She could not surely refuse to become a good pilgrim.'

with 'its encircling love—the importance of the true-note, Wednesday to Saturday night.' But the first edition ran straight on, thus:—

'Well on Saturday, about midnight, they began to pray, and continued in prayer till almost break of day.

'Now a little before it was day, good Christian, as one half-amazed, brake out in this passionate speech—'What a fool, quoth he, am I, thus to lie in a stinking dungeon, when I may as well walk at liberty! I have a key in my bosom, called Promise, that will, I am persuaded, open any lock in Doubting-Castle.' "How said Hopeful, That is good news, good brother, pluck it out of thy bosom, and try."

It was on Sunday morning that Christian remembered his key, and found deliverance.

But why had Hopeful no key? The reason seems to be that, because he joined Christian only as late as at Vanity Fair, he had never received a 'roll,' nor had he been instructed at the Interpreter's House or in the rarities of the Palace Beautiful. In other words, he had not studied his Bible as Christian did, and it will be noted that, in subsequent conversations, he does not use its language as freely as did his companion.

So the Road goes on, up hill and down dale. From his 'den' in Bedford prison Bunyan sees saints and sinners tramping along it. Sometimes the saint will be beguiled into a by-path, and gets into sad trouble before he finds his way back. For the most part the sinners saunter, like Talkative, 'the son of one Say-well, who dwelt in Prating-row,'

or, like Simple, Sloth, and Presumption, they sleep 'with fetters on their heels'; or with Mistrust and Timorous they run in the wrong direction, for fear of chained lions. But to all who read, Bunyan's message is that, if a pilgrim is to arrive, he must keep awake, be sober, and play the man.

CHAPTER X

BUNYAN: THE MAN HIMSELF

VERY little guidance is to be obtained from Bunyan's writings as to dates, places, or family history. Yet no man more clearly reveals himself. *Grace Abounding* gives an account of the four years struggle in his soul, by means of which he won his way to spiritual peace and light. From stray notes in his sermons, and by a study of his methods, and especially of his preferences, in *Pilgrim's Progress*, we can build up an intelligible and self-consistent estimate of the man, in his habit as he lived.

By great good fortune there has been preserved to us one small piece of autobiography, in the shape of his 'Relation of the Imprisonment of Mr. John Bunyan, written by Himself, and never before published.' It bears the publisher's name, and the date is 1765. It is one of the liveliest and most moving documents of its kind in our language, and may be read in full in the first volume of Offor's edition of the Works, and is there divided into four parts. The first is the story of his examination before Mr. Francis Wingate, and in it is the famous picture of 'Mr. Foster of Bedford, who coming out of another room, and seeing of me by the light of the

candle, for it was dark night when I came thither, he said unto me, Who is there? John Bunyan?, with such seeming affection, as if he would have leaped in my neck and kissed me, ("A right Judas!" notes the Editor), which made me somewhat wonder, since he had ever been a close opposer of the ways of God.'

The second part is the account of the examination before Justices Kelynge, Chester, Snagg, &c. This was the Kelynge who said that the Book of Common Prayer ought now to be used, because 'it hath been ever since the Apostles' time.' The Justice, being told by Bunyan that he did not come to the Parish Church, because he was not so commanded in the Word of God, replied, 'We are commanded to pray.' 'Yes,' said John, 'but not by the Common Prayer Book.' 'But,' argued the Judge, 'Christ taught his disciples to pray. Cannot one man teach another to pray? Faith comes by hearing, and one man may convince another of sin, and therefore prayers made by men, and read over, are good to teach, and help men to pray.' 'Sir,' replied Bunyan, now thoroughly roused, 'the Scripture saith, that it is the Spirit that helpeth our infirmities. Mark, it doth not say the Common Prayer Book teacheth us to pray, but the Spirit. It is the Spirit that helpeth our infirmities, saith the apostle; he doth not say it is the Common Prayer Book.' All this, and much more, Kelynge called pedlar's French, and Bunyan must leave off his canting, or go to prison. So to prison he went again.

The third part is the account of 'the discourse had between the Clerk of the Peace, Mr. Cobb, and myself,' when Cobb came to the gaol to persuade him to promise to cease holding private meetings. It was a friendly and neighbourly talk, well conducted on both sides, but, though he knew that his sentence was exile or death if he did not yield, Bunyan was adamant. 'As for your saying I may meet in public, if I may be suffered, I would gladly do it. Let me have but meeting enough in public, and I shall use the less to have them in private. I do not meet in private because I am afraid to have meetings in public.'¹

Afraid ! That was the last thing Bunyan would be, except it were of his sins and failures. These trials and conversations show that his judges were not altogether unreasonable; they seemed conscious that the Law pressed hardly on such men as Bunyan, and they really did try, most of them, to find a way out for him. But his feet were on the Road that was as straight as a rule could make it, and not an inch would he budge from it. He was an Independent to the backbone, and he knew no such thing as the fear of man.

Courage is one of Bunyan's favourite virtues. Sometimes it is of the kind which one expects in the Front Line. Of such soldiers in the 'Progress' Valiant-for-Truth is the hero. At Deadman's Lane, the place where Little-faith had been robbed, the party of pilgrims came on 'a man with his sword

¹The last part describes Mrs. Bunyan's pleading before Sir Matthew Hale, mentioned above, p. 40.

drawn, and his face all over with blood.' Three men—Wild-head, Inconsiderate, and Pragmatic, all of them evidently 'enthusiasts' and extremists, such as abounded in the Puritan days—fell on him with three demands—Would he join them? Would he go back? Would he die upon the place? To each Valiant returned a doughty No! 'Then these three, to wit, Wild-head, Inconsiderate, and Pragmatic, drew upon me, and I also drew upon them. So we fell to it, one against three, for the space of above three hours. They have left upon me, as you see, some of the marks of their valour, and have also carried away with them some of mine. They are but just now gone. Then said Great-heart to Mr. Valiant-for-Truth, Thou hast worthily behaved thyself. Let me see thy sword. So he showed it him. When he had taken it in his hand, and looked thereon a while, he said, Ha! it is a right Jerusalem blade.'

But while Bunyan greatly 'loved one that he found to be a man of his hands,' he also prized the finer qualities of such courage. One can see that his blood was up when he wrote the story of the fight between Great-heart and Giant Maul, for the giant had accused the other of kidnapping and gathering up women and children, and carrying them to a strange country. Something of the same scandal had been thrown at Bunyan. So the fight is described with great force. Twice Great-heart is stricken, but gets in a blow that fetched the giant down to the ground. 'Nay, hold, let me recover,' quoth he. So Mr. Great-heart fairly let him get up.'

That is fine sportsmanship toward such a foe, but we are glad when Great-heart 'fetches him one' under the fifth rib. Each of Bunyan's most alive characters is, like old Mr. Honest, 'a cock of the right kind,' in spite of the common opinion that true pilgrims 'are the soonest overcome of any.'

The Road has other scenes than cockpits, and there are calls for other kinds of courage. There is the dogged persistence of Christian who, climbing Hill Difficulty, is forced to fall 'from running to going, and from going to scrabbling on his hands and knees'; there is the nervous tenacity of that 'chicken-hearted' man, Mr. Fearing, of whom Great-heart tells so touching a story. He made no stick at places like Hill Difficulty, 'nor did he much fear the lions; his troubles were not about such things as these; his fear was about acceptance at last.' His fears paralysed him at the Slough, at the Wicket-gate, in the Valley of the Shadow—where he kept crying, 'Oh, the hobgoblins will have me! the hobgoblins will have me!'—and at the bridgeless River. But there is a noble refrain in the story—'He would not go back again neither.'

The reader who compares these stories with that of Bunyan before his judges will recognize the likeness.¹

This was a man of amazing diligence. His friend, Charles Doe, compiled a list of books written

¹ 'This is no Independent Minister: this is a stout, big-busted ancient, adjusting his shoulder-belts, twirling his long moustaches as he speaks.' R. L. Stevenson, *Lay Morals*, p. 191.

by him, and says that he himself had sold 3,000 of them. At the end of the list he appends a note: 'Here are sixty pieces of his labours, and he was Sixty Years of Age.' His first was written in 1656, and he published on the average about two volumes for every year he lived after that date. His conversion waked him up! But from 1672, he was also a Pastor of a very widely scattered flock, and travelled the roads of Eastern England for thousands of miles. During most of his life he also worked at his trade. True of him would be Mr. Honest's words, 'I have been a traveller in this road many a day: and I have taken notice of many things.' Some things roused the ready satirist in him. He notices that By-ends 'never strives against wind and tide,' but is 'always most zealous when Religion goes in his silver slippers, and loves much to walk with him in the street, if the sun shines and the people applaud him.' He well knows the type of Mr. Talkative of Prating-row, 'a tall man, and something more comely at a distance than at hand.' He has met the people who 'run into the shopkeeper's debt'—what would he have said to the hire-system?—and some who, like Mr. Temporary, live 'two miles off Honesty.' He has nothing but scorn for Pickthank, the witness for the prosecution in the trial at Vanity Fair, and, with a true instinct, makes him class together 'My Lord Lechery, Sir Having-Greedy, and all the rest of their nobility.' Bunyan's experience had proved the truth of our Lord's words that covetousness and sensuality are near neighbours.¹

He was a great lover of his fellows. He loved their little kindly acts, like Christiana's tip of a 'gold angel' to the porter at the Palace Beautiful ; and their innocent romancings such as Mercy's shake of the head as she protests (when young Mr. Brisk leaves off courting her because she is so charitable to the poor), 'that I might a had husbands before now, though I spoke not of it to any ; but they were such as did not like my conditions, though never did any of them find fault with my person.' Bunyan, too, was a great peacemaker. In the Bedford Church, if there was an errant brother to be interviewed, 'Bro. Bunyan' was certain to be appointed to deal lovingly with him ; and when he became a Minister of the Word, he proved himself a diligent pastor. The anonymous friend who wrote the account of his last days tells us that he took great care to visit the sick. It must have been almost worth while to be ill, if one could only have John Bunyan come in, and pray by one's bedside. His gifts of sympathy and wise experience were like 'spoils taken in battle' with his own ill-health and with his own temptations.

Having himself enjoyed few opportunities for learning in his youth, he set a high value on education and intelligence. What he had of culture, in maturer age, he had won by habits of hard study, his tutor being, as we have seen, the English Bible. He was taught therein to regard it as a binding duty to become the best that was in him to be. He wrote down Stupidity, the town from which Fearing came, as being four degrees beyond the City

of Destruction ; and old Honest, a fellow-townsman of Fearing's, says that his town is the worse of the two, because 'we lie more off from the sun, and so are more cold and senseless.' It is said that the only one of his characters with whom Bunyan deals severely is 'that green-headed Ignorance,' a very brisk lad who swung jauntily into the King's Way, coming to it down a little crooked lane from the country of Conceit. The story of his fate makes a terrible finish to the First Part of the 'Progress.'

Bunyan was passionately fond of Nature. He listened to 'our country birds : they sing these notes but seldom, except it be in the spring, when the flowers appear and the sun shines warm : and then you may hear them all day long. They make the woods places desirous to be in.' It sounds modern to hear Mercy say, in the Valley of Humiliation :

'I love to be in such places where there is no rattling with coaches nor rumbling with wheels. Methinks here one may think.' Bunyan was so happy when the love of God was discovered to him, that he 'could have told of His mercy to the very crows that sat upon the ploughed lands before him, had they been capable of understanding him.' Pastoral scenes affected him deeply. He has shepherds in the place that bears the most beautiful name in his book, the Delectable Mountains. His sweetest song he puts into the mouth of the shepherd boy, who was 'in very mean Cloaths but of a fresh and well-favoured Countenance, and as he sate by himself, he sung : '

He that is down, needs fear no fall,
 He that is low, no pride:
 He that is humble, ever shall
 Have God to be his Guide,
 I am content with what I have,
 Little be it or much:
 And, Lord, contentment still I crave,
 Because thou savest such.
 Fulness to such a burden is
 That go on Pilgrimage:
 Here little, and hereafter Bliss,
 Is best from Age to Age.

It is a lovely picture, and it comes from the very soul of this wistful prisoner. The finest passage in *Pepys' Diary* records a similar scene on Epsom Downs, under date July 14, 1667, written while Bunyan lay in Bedford Gaol.

Our Puritan loved music. Bells ring throughout his pages. He delighted to tell stories 'for the ripening of the wits' of children, for whom also he wrote his *Books for Boys and Girls*.¹ He well knew the hospitality of the road-side inn, at whose door he would enter, 'not knocking, for folks used not to knock at the door of an inn,' and his description of the fare one had for supper is almost that of an epicure.

But most of all he loved sunshine. And no wonder, for 'upon a day the good providence of God called me to Bedford to work at my calling, and in one of the streets of that town I came where there were three or four poor women sitting at a door in the sun, talking of the things of God . . . I saw as if they were on the sunny side of some high

¹A copy of the first edition was sold in London about 1926 for some hundreds of pounds.

mountain, there refreshing themselves with the pleasant beams of the sun, while I was shivering and shrinking in the cold, afflicted with frost, snow, and dark clouds ; methought also betwixt me and them I saw a wall about this mountain. Now through this wall my soul did greatly desire to pass, concluding that if I could I would there also comfort myself with the heat of their sun.'

This passage concerns the days before his conversion, after which he walked habitually in the light. So when he had brought Christian up Hill Difficulty, he sees him, on his first night in the House Beautiful, laid to rest 'in a large upper chamber, whose window opened towards the sunrising : the name of the chamber was Peace.'¹

The Slough of Despond, which 'doth much stew out its filth, especially against change of weather,' kept Fearing hesitating before it for a month. But he got over 'on a sunshine morning.' Giant Despair threatened Christian and Hopeful with his grievous crab-tree cudgel, but the sun came out, and down fell Despair in a fit, 'for he sometimes, in sunshine weather, fell into fits.' At the sight of the natural glory of the City where lay his journey's end, 'with the reflection of the sunbeams upon it, Christian with desire fell sick.' Sunshine, physical and spiritual, was Bunyan's life.

The end of the Second Part is almost prophetic. It describes the crossing of Mr. Standfast, who, before his departure, sent messages to his dear ones.

¹Note that Bunyan, though a seventeenth-century cottager, makes the window open,

'Tell them,' said he, 'that this river hath been a terror to many ; yea, the thoughts of it have often frightened me. Now methink I stand easy. I see myself now at the end of my journey : my toilsome days are ended. Wherever I have seen the print of my Lord's shoe in the earth, there have I coveted to set my feet too. He has held me, yea, my steps have been strengthened in His Way.'

John Bunyan died in London on August 31, 1688, and his passing was as if the trumpets which had sounded for his pilgrims, were welcoming him as he entered the river, and stepped out on the other side into eternal sunshine.

TRANSLATION.

COPY OF WARRANT FOR THE ARREST
OF
JOHN BUNYAN
PREVIOUS TO HIS SECOND IMPRISONMENT IN
BEDFORD JAIL
IN THE REIGN OF KING CHARLES THE SECOND.

TO THE CONSTABLES OF BEDFORD AND
TO EVERY OF THEM.

I Neper. Whereas information and complaint is made unto us that notwithstanding the King's Majestie late Act of most gracious generall and free pardon to all his subjects for past misdemeanours, that by his said clemencie and indulgent grace and favour they might bee moved and induced for the time to come more carefully to observe his Highenes lawes and statutes, and to continue in their loyall and due obedience to his Majestie, yett occ John Bunyan of your said towne, T^r d^r, hath divers times within one month last past in contempt of his Majesties good lawe preached or teached at a Conventicle meeting or assembly under colour or pretence of exercise of Religion in other manner then according to the Liturgie or Practise of the Church of England. These are therefore in his Hum: Monoux Majesties name to command you forthwith to apprehend and bring the Body of the said John Bunyan before us or any of us or other his Majesties Justice of Peace within the said county to answer the premises and further to doe and receive as to Law and Justice Will: Franklin shall appertaine, and hereof you are not to faile, Given under our handes and seals the ffoworth day of March in the seaven and twentieth yeare of the Raigne of our most gracious Sovereigne Lord King Charles the Second, Ao qui Dni Juxtagr: 1674.

John Ventris.

Will: Spencer.

Will: Gery. St: Jo: Chernocke. Wm. Daniell.
T. Brown. Galus Squier. W. Foster.

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